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THIS WEEK ON CHICAGOREADER.COM



Movie Tuesday: Greatest hits of Italy's post-Pasolini decade

Ben Sachs on five films that capture the era's filmmaking at its best



Inside the Pride Parade

The parade was cut short because of thunderstorms, but not before photographer Kathleen Hinkel captured some memorable moments.



Sunday's storms actually improved Lyrical Lemonade's Summer Smash

It's grown into Chicago's biggest rap festival in just its second year, but it needed a nudge from the elements to get its act together, Leor Galil reports.

In last week's Generation Stonewall spread, we mistakenly attributed a quote to David Stienecker. The Reader regrets the error.

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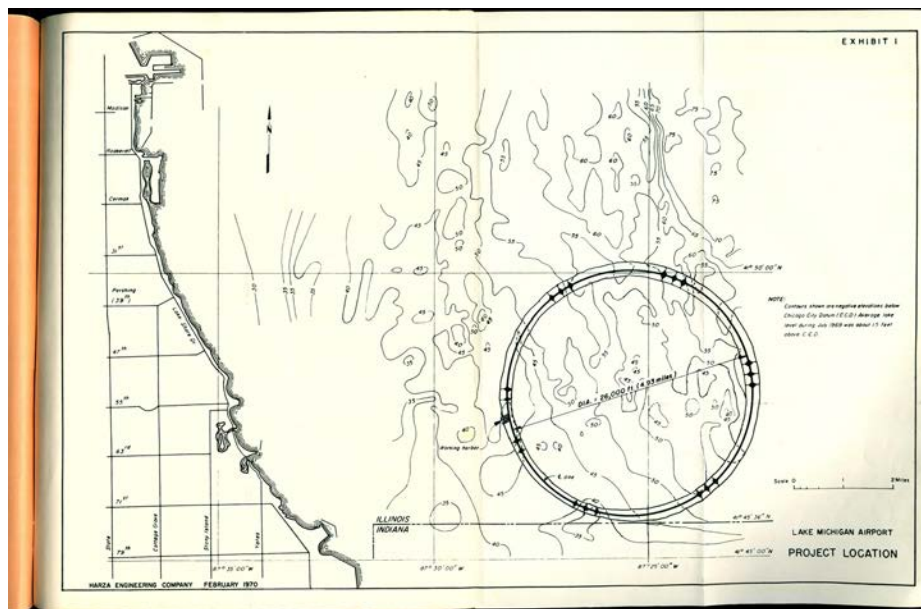
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A Lake Michigan site for Chicago's third major airport, 1970
 CITY OF CHICAGO, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

SIGHTSEEING

An airport in the lake

How Mayor Richard J. Daley's ambitious plan failed to take flight

By JEFF NICHOLS

The next time you're cruising on Lake Shore Drive south of McCormick Place, look to the lake and try to imagine how different your commute might have been if Mayor Richard J. Daley had pulled off his most audacious public works plan—a major airport built in Lake Michigan, five miles from shore.

The idea of building a major airport in the lake predated Mayor Daley. In 1928, the City Council approved funding to plan an airport built on an artificial island stretching from 16th to 31st Street. Seven years later, the federal government denied funding for an island air station east of the Adler Planetarium, on the grounds that the area could not cope with the noise, traffic, and other disruptions a big airport would bring. Downtown would get its airfield, but it would come in the form of Meigs Field, a single-runway facility that could not handle large jets.

In 1945, the committee tasked with recommending the site of a new international airport considered sites north of Foster Avenue (5200 North) and south of Rainbow Beach (7500 South), but due to construction costs

it chose the lightly populated site that later became O'Hare. Two decades later, with fears that O'Hare and Midway were approaching full capacity, the city commissioned a study to explore the feasibility of an airport in Lake Michigan rather than in the suburbs.

An airport in the lake would solve a number of problems for Daley. There simply was no place within the city boundaries to put a major airport. It was one thing to demolish 106 acres to make room for a Chicago campus of the University of Illinois, a project largely supported by Chicagoans outside of the near-west-side neighborhood that was destroyed. It was another thing to clear 8,000 acres for a third airport. Although Richard M. Daley considered building an airport around Lake Calumet in the early 90s, this area was still dominated by smoky industries. An airport in Lake Michigan could be situated close to the all-important downtown, yet the city wouldn't have to demolish a single home or relocate a single industrial plant to build it.

Unlike a "Chicago" airport built in adjoining unincorporated DuPage or Will Counties, Chicagoans would take the lion's share of

the jobs generated by an airport on the south side. The communities closest to the airport would see dramatic investments in the form of hotels, restaurants, and other facilities to service airline traffic. Moreover, an airport in Lake Michigan would be the kind of make-no-small-plans enterprise that Chicago mayors and their constituents love—an awe-inspiring public works project that would pump tens of millions of dollars into the construction trades and leave a heroic monument to the city's technical ingenuity.

The initial report by the Hanza Engineering Company, a Chicago firm renowned for designing dams and other large-scale hydrological projects, considered a site due east of 35th Street, with the Stevenson Expressway four miles across the lake to the island airport. But in its 1970 report to the city, Hanza settled on a site whose center would be 8.5 miles due east of 55th Street. Hanza envisioned that barges would create a circular dike five miles in diameter, dumping tons of sand or rock-fill into the lake. Over a three-month period, all the water within this circle would be pumped out. After the diked enclosure had been fortified with rock quarried from below the lake bed, the terminals, hangars, and runways would be constructed. A causeway would connect the airport to the mainland. The entire airport would be the antithesis of an artificial island, with planes flying into a space that had been the very bottom of the lake.

Hanza Engineering noted it had employed C. H. Mortimer, a widely respected limnologist who specialized in the Great Lakes, as a consultant on ecological matters, yet the report didn't dedicate much space to environmental concerns. It conceded that fish would be "expelled" from the airport zone during construction, but maintained the total effect on marine life would "be localized and quantitatively unimportant." Hanza was confident that all the wastewater produced by the airport could be piped to treatment plants on the mainland, and that aircraft emissions would not lead to water pollution.

The strongest opposition to the Lake Michigan site came from a fairly predictable lot: Hyde Parkers, who weren't thrilled by the prospect of sharing their part of the lake with a gigantic airport; suburbanites, who saw in the Lake Michigan site a singularly selfish

and potentially dangerous scheme; and environmentalists. Unfortunately for Daley, his proposal came at a time when the public was particularly anxious about the health of the Great Lakes. "The lake is already threatened with extinction by pollution," as an editorialist at WIND-AM put it. "It doesn't need any additional threats."

City Hall simply refused to concede any real risks in its pharaonic project. Milton Pikarsky, Chicago Commissioner of Public Works, claimed in May 1971 that water quality and aquatic life would actually *improve* if the airport were built. "All the evidence we have indicates we can overcome any environmental problems," he told the *Chicago Tribune*.

Although Pikarsky claimed fog wouldn't be an issue because takeoffs and landings would be automated, air controllers and pilots contended that the airport would be vulnerable to icing and low visibility, and judged its location too close to O'Hare and Midway's crowded airspace for it to be efficient. Nor did City Hall adequately address a 1969 Federal Aviation Administration-commissioned report that warned that catastrophic dike failure was still a modern phenomenon. The barrier protecting the airport could be put under stress by severe events involving weather, leakage, sabotage, or accidents.

Critics also came with common-sense objections that were difficult to wave away. However daring, the experimental design of the airport seemed vulnerable to cost overruns. American airports had several entry and exit points in case of emergency; this would have just one. Traffic on Lake Shore Drive could not handle an airport the size of O'Hare. In addition to how such an unprecedented project might affect the lake ecology, there was also the question of whether the noise of constant flights might simply bounce off the lake and disrupt the peace with incessant jet noise.

In the end, City Hall was unable to contain opposition in Springfield or Washington. In May 1972, Daley told the press that he wanted to end the "emotionalism and controversy" around building an airport in the lake, stating he would oppose building a third airport in any location. With that, his dream airport disappeared as if engulfed by the lake. **✂**

@backwards_river



Chicago has been an official Sanctuary City since 2016. © MARCO VERCH/FICKR

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT

Learn to be a Welcoming City

Give me your tired masses yearning to play cornhole

INDEPENDENCE DAY WEEKEND is a good moment to reflect upon what more we can each do to guarantee that BBQs and cornhole can be enjoyed in peace by anyone who chooses to live in our fair city. A close reading of the Declaration of Independence (the reason for the season) will bring you quickly to the quotation that is drilled into our collective consciousness so fiercely that one could imagine finding a framed needlepoint of it at the dollar store: self-evident truths, all men equal, life, liberty, happiness, you betcha.

But about the rest—it's a position paper, a document declaring not just what the writers wanted but also what the high-spirited refugees who migrated to these shores did not want. "The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States," said the writing committee of the Second Continental Congress. They followed this in the document with a list of problems the "present King" had created: "He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the

Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands." You know, just as an example.

Chicago is an official Sanctuary City, and in 2016 passed the Welcoming City Ordinance to help prevent undocumented residents from being prosecuted based solely on their immigration status. We have policies to make sure people are taken care of but many of our newest residents may not know about them or feel comfortable reaching out for help. What can longtime Chicagoans do to help our neighbors who may be facing prosecution? The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has published a great list of things to think about on their website including two simple but often overlooked steps: learn about the history of immigration in the United States (the AFSC helpfully links to a list of suggested viewing) and connect with the immigrant community. If you don't feel like you have anyone in your life that is affected by this issue, look toward your community of worship, your block club, or your local com-

munity center. You can band together to make immigrants and their families feel welcome regardless of their status by making sure they are included in your community gatherings.

Those looking to do a little more can also turn to organizations like the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. The coalition is part of a new initiative called Chicago Immigrant Transportation Assistance (CITA) that supports asylum seekers leaving detention centers with their ground transportation needs. And Centro Romero in Rogers Park is just one of several Chicago organizations that needs volunteers for family programs, teen support, and legal programs focused on our immigrant communities. Being a good neighbor is a meaningful pursuit, and as the writers of the Declaration of Independence concluded, "for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor."

—SALEM COLLO-JULIN

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NEWS & POLITICS



After last week's debate, the latest cautiousness has to do with health care. © TAXREBATE.ORG.UK/Flickr

POLITICS

Clinton conventional wisdom

How fear drives the opposition to single-payer health care

By **BEN JORAVSKY**

If you want a reminder of the cowardly cautiousness of mainstream Democrats, check out this moment from the Great Debate.

No, not last week's presidential debates in Miami. I'm talking about the long-forgotten vice presidential debate in which Joe Biden, then Barack Obama's running mate, took on Sarah Palin.

Gwen Ifill, the moderator, looked Biden in the eye and asked: "Do you support gay marriage?"

In response to which Biden declared: "No. Barack Obama nor I support redefining from a civil side what constitutes marriage. We do not support that."

Ifill said, It's nice that you agree on something, and they went on to another subject.

That debate took place in 2008. But it might as well have happened in another lifetime as far as attitudes go. Can't imagine anyone remotely connected to the Democrats uttering such a declaration these days.

Personally, I don't believe Biden or Obama cared one way or another about gay marriage. They were just falling in line with the prevailing conventional wisdom that you can't get too far ahead of the voters for fear of alienating the proverbial swing vote in Virginia, Michigan, etc.

So it goes with the Nervous Nellies who run the Democratic Party. Always cautioning candidates to move right, always ordering the rank and file to shut up and betray their ideals.

There are plenty of examples besides gay marriage—like marijuana. Back in 2011, when Mick Dumke and I started writing about the unfairness of locking up Black people for something that white people do all the time, we could barely find any Democrats willing to publicly discuss the matter.

Generally, they'd go off the record to tell us that they had nothing against reefer. In fact, they may have—chuckle, chuckle—smoked some over the weekend. But, you know, don't want to get too far ahead of voters.

NEWS & POLITICS

And so it took eight more years of penalizing Black guys before lawmakers finally found the courage to legalize weed in Illinois.

After last week's debate, the latest cautiousness has to do with health care. But before I get into that, allow me to share my two explanations as to why Democrats are such scaredy cats.

One, the party strategists and leaders are still following a playbook largely written by Bill Clinton, based on lessons he learned in 1972.

As a political operative for George McGovern's presidential campaign, Clinton watched President Nixon roll to victory by painting the Democrats as tax-and-spend, weak-on-crime, pot-smoking commies.

Clinton's been running to the right ever since, pausing to pay tribute to Martin Luther King Jr. or Bobby Kennedy in order to prove his heart is good.

The other explanation is that Republicans have become really good at taunting and trash talking—scaring Democrats into running to the right.

That brings me to health care. Consider this riff from a recent column by Bret Stephens, a right-wing pundit for the *New York Times*, chastising Democratic candidates for championing a single-payer health care plan.

"They don't pay the premiums for private health insurance," he wrote. "We're supposed to give up ours in exchange for some V.A.-type nightmare."

Other pundits and strategists—Rahm Emanuel included—are advising the Democratic candidates not to push for single payer on the grounds that voters really like the private insurance they get through their employers.

Hearing this has set me on a crusade to find people who actually like their private health insurance.

So far, I can't find anyone. But I keep trying. I'm almost at the point where I'm stopping strangers on the street.

Don't get me wrong. I realize there are people who like their doctors or nurses or the real nice receptionist who sits behind the front desk at the clinic. And there are those who are worried about what would happen if we went to a different system. So, yes, they're vulnerable to Republican scare tactics.

But liking the actual insurance? Man, good luck finding someone who even knows how their private insurance works. You'd be surprised how many people are a little wobbly on the difference between deductible and co-pay, much less how much they pay for either.

But that won't stop Democratic Nervous Nellies from trying to scare voters into signing on to the current debacle on the grounds that swing voters are frightened by "a V.A.-type nightmare."

While we're at it, for a different view on the medical service provided by the Veterans Administration, I turned to someone who actually uses it, my old friend Milo Samardzija.

Back in the 60s, Milo got drafted and sent to Vietnam. He now gets his medical service at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center on the near west side.

In the last several years, Milo's had two major surgeries—one on his brain, the other on his heart. Doesn't get more major than that. All free of charge at Jesse Brown.

"To call the VA system a nightmare makes no sense. It's not perfect, for sure, but it takes care of its people. They saved my life—the treatment was great. Great doctors. Wonderful staff. It didn't cost me a cent.

"People will say, 'Milo, you've got it good. You get free health care.' I tell them, 'Yeah, well, go join the army and fuck around with the Taliban for a couple of years, and you'll get free health care too.'"

Here's hoping that free health care will one day be as readily accepted as gay marriage. And that none of us will have to fight a war to get it. 🇺🇸

🐦 @joravben

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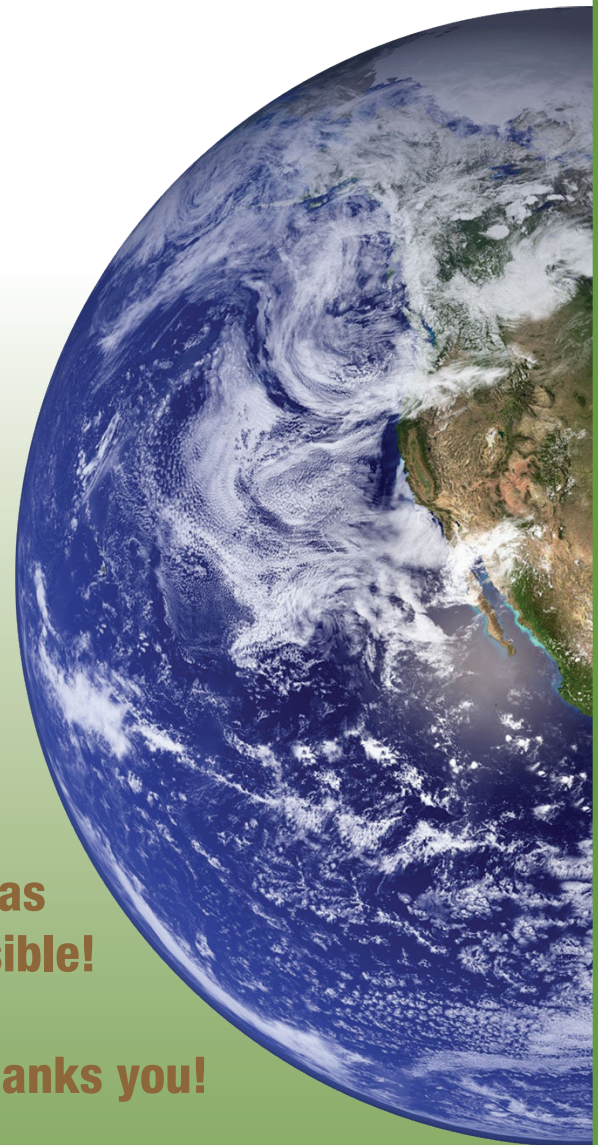
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Clockwise from upper left: Himalayan tornado fry, fish momo, choela momo, goat biryani, and paneer momo NICK MURWAY

RESTAURANT REVIEW

The Momo World—almost an International House of Dumplings

A University Village storefront shows the global versatility of the Nepali street food.

By **MIKE SULA**

Madhu Budhathoki knows about the viral urban legend known as the Momo challenge. A customer at his University Village restaurant told him about the creepy bird lady who supposedly appears on the screens children plant their faces to and ultimately encourages them to kill themselves.

The only real challenge at his small count-

er-service spot the Momo World is avoiding death by dumpling—that is, after eating too many of the twentysomething different Nepali-style momo Budhathoki and his wife, Poonam, offer.

The momo is a dumpling similar in some respects to the Korean mandu, the Japanese gyoza, and the Chinese soup dumpling, or *xiao long bao*. In Tibet, the momo's ancestral home, they're often stuffed with yak meat. In Kath-

mandu, where Budhathoki comes from, water buffalo momo are prized. And since water buffalo is hard to come by here, the Budhathokis stuff dumpling wrappers with paneer, chicken, pork, vegetables, fish, and even chocolate. They steam them, fry them, saute, and sauce them, or serve them in soup—*johl achar*, to be specific, a thin, tomatoey broth with soybeans and sesame sauce that is another specialty of Budhathoki's hometown.

I don't have a lot of use for tilapia, which the *Houston Chronicle* not-famously-enough once described as “tofu with fins,” but the Momo World's fish momo, stuffed with a forcemeat of the ignoble species, seasoned with lemon and masala (including cumin, cinnamon, cilantro, and onion), is so kinetically juicy that it comes close to a credible xiao long bao.

At the Momo World, they're using commercial dumpling wrappers, which results in a durable dumpling unlike those at Chiya Chai, the city's other momo specialist, where the wrappers are more delicate but tend to tear, making desirable qualities like juiciness a bit of a gamble with each individual dumpling. Other varieties may not be as nicely aqueous as the Momo World's fish momo, but they are consistently juicy, whether they get an assist from their saute medium, as with the *choela* momo, a fiery chicken- or vegetable-stuffed purse stained with chiles, Sichuan peppercorn, and pickled tomato that may be the Nashville hot chicken of the dumpling world; or dipped in one of eight sauces that accompany plain steamed dumplings such as the graceful spermatozoa-shaped paneer momo or the classic squat ziggurats filled with chicken or pork.

The Budhathokis also traffic in modern variations like the momo marinated in tandoori-style spices, skewered, then grilled, or the cross-cultural chipotle momo, panfried in smoky chile sauce and cream and served with sour cream and cilantro.

One can live or die on momo alone, but dumplings aren't everything at the Momo World. Budhathoki, who is a former partner in the group behind Himalayan Restaurant and was a cook back in Kathmandu, offers a few other Nepali dishes such as *sekuwa* (chunks of sauteed chicken, lamb, or paneer marinated in yogurt, chiles, Sichuan peppercorn, turmeric, and coriander) and the potato salad *aloo ko achar*, with chickpeas, avocado, and yogurt.

And he knows how to make a mean goat biryani and other familiar northern Indian dishes, like chana masala and aloo gobi matar.

Search the Reader's online database of thousands of Chicago-area restaurants—and add your own review—at chicagoreader.com/food.



The Momo
World's interior
NICK MURWAY



Chocolate momo
NICK MURWAY

There are samosas and a Himalayan riff on the universal street-food standard the potato tornado, this one dusted with masala.

But it's the chocolate momo—chewy fried purses drenched with chocolate syrup and filled with a kind of ganache loaded with almonds and dried fruit—that reveals the

platform's potential to cross over into state fair territory. It's a dumpling that suggests its own kind of challenge: What else can you put in a momo?

What can't you put in a momo?

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What does Dyke March mean to you?

Photographed by ROBYN DAY



↑ **COADY CARLSON:** “I think it’s incredibly important for visibility of people of all sorts of different identities—gender identities, sexual identities, not necessarily the binary. I don’t identify along the binary, including sexually or genderwise, so I think it’s incredibly important to be visible, and to be out, and to be proud about those in-between identities.”



↑ **CARLOS OCAMPO:** “This march is more inclusive and represents people like me. I’m Native American. I’m Mexican. I’m nonbinary. I like that it doesn’t have all this corporate sponsorship. So for me, this is more my style.”

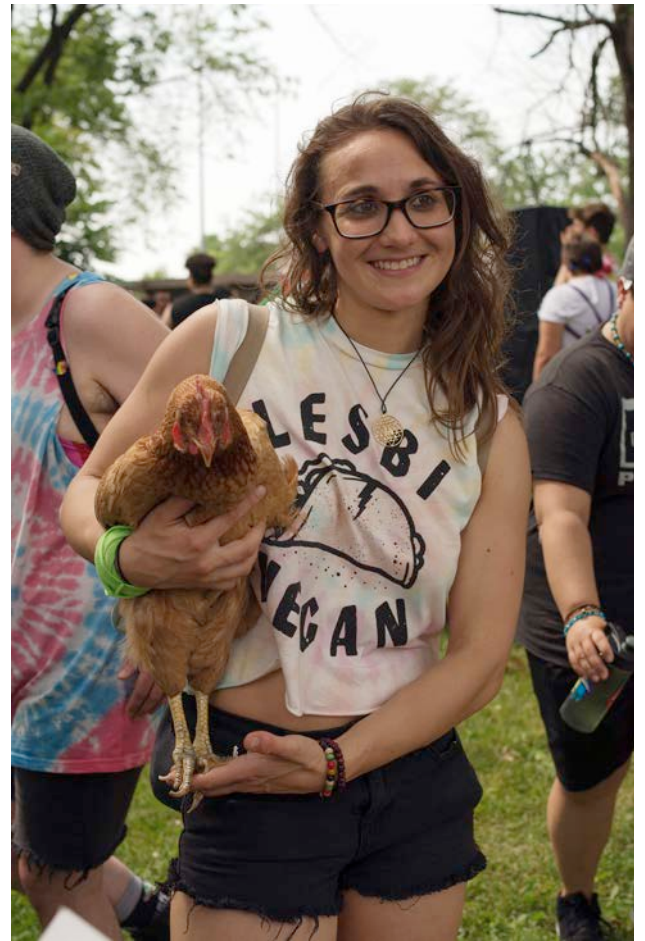


↑ **ALEXIS BENNETT:** “Dyke March gives me a space to commune with other queers like myself and see myself represented in so many other people. Right now it’s such a respite from daily fatigue, from what we see in the news, and experience day to day as queers.”



Anna Kelly (center left): "I think it's very pivotal to highlight trans voices at Dyke March, and I'm glad it's happening."

Ebonni Watford (center right): "Literally yesterday, my sister posted on Facebook, 'Dykes are always hitting on me.' Thinking about the sadness [of] being called a dyke in that moment yesterday, and then the empowerment [I feel] to call myself one today, is amazing."



↑ KELSEY ATKINSON: "It's important for us to stand together as a community against such an oppressive government with Trump in office. And Dyke March is an important alternative to the Pride Parade. We're not here to center the corporations and capitalism. We're here to center ourselves. We're here cheering for ourselves, fighting for our lives and our rights." 🏳️‍🌈



← LINDA WINTER: "My heart's in the revolution. My heart is for the full rights of all people. And I don't see how that will happen under capitalism. We're seeing examples right now how, you know, rights that were won in the 60s are now being eroded and taken away. And [I believe in] a revolution for the people."





Ismail's family was among the first Rohingya to reach Chicago in 2012. 📷 ANJALI PINTO

‘A place I can call home’

Chicago has one of the largest Rohingya refugee populations in the country. This is one survivor's story.

By **EMILY FISHBEIN**

In September 2017, Muhammad Habib Ismail joined fellow Rohingya Muslims on a march through downtown Chicago. The march, organized by the Rohingya Cultural Center, was to protest the Myanmar military's campaign of rape, arson, and killing of Rohingya in northern Rakhine State, which UN investigators found to have been carried out "with genocidal intent."

In Myanmar, the Rohingya are commonly referred to as "Bengalis," alluding to their perceived status as illegal interlopers despite having lived in the Buddhist-majority country for generations. They have been stateless since a 1982 law stripped them of citizenship. In August 2017, the Myanmar military launched "clearance operations" in retaliation against an attack on military outposts in northern Rakhine State by insurgent group the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army. An estimated 730,000 Rohingya fled across the border into Bangladesh in the following months.

More than 900,000 Rohingya currently live in camps in the Cox's Bazar district of Bangladesh, which now holds the largest refugee settlement in the world, according to the United Nations. A further 128,000 remain in camps on the outskirts of Sittwe, the Rakhine State capital, where they have been denied freedom of movement or access to basic services since fleeing their homes during a wave of intercommunal violence in 2012.

Ismail was born in Kelantan, Malaysia, in 1994 with no documentation other than a refugee card issued through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). His paternal grandparents fled from Myan-

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mar with his father during a mass exodus of Rohingya in 1978. Ismail's maternal grandparents, who are Muslim but not Rohingya, sent his mother to Malaysia along with an aunt when she was six, in hopes that she would have better economic prospects than in Myanmar. Ismail's parents met when his mother was 14 and his father 17. They married within the year and had three children.

In Malaysia, where refugees are classified together with undocumented immigrants, Ismail's family did not have access to public services or legal employment. When he was a child, his father scraped together an income selling Islamic books door-to-door. As is customary in many Rohingya families, his father did not allow his mother to work. Ismail attended public school until fourth grade, when his teacher asked for his legal documentation for a field trip.

"That's when they came to know I was a refugee," he remembers. It was the end of his education in Malaysia. Only 11 years old, he started working, and over the next six years held jobs washing cars and processing chickens. Without legal authorization to work and unable to advocate for his rights, he earned less than his Malaysian coworkers—about \$3.50 per hour—and was often denied pay.

In 2008, Ismail's father suffered a stroke that rendered him barely able to speak or walk. Denied access to Malaysia's free public health care and unable to afford medical fees, he relied on herbal remedies. Ismail, then 14, became the family's sole wage earner. With funds running dry, his mother traveled to the capital city of Kuala Lumpur to request assistance from UNHCR. Three months later, they were informed that they would be considered for resettlement to the United States. The screening process under the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program—extensive interviews, medical and security checks—took four years.

Ismail's mother initially viewed resettlement with trepidation. Neither she nor her husband were literate, they didn't have close friends or family in America, and she worried about finding halal food and a Muslim community in a foreign city. She told her children she agreed to go to give them the chance for an education.

In July 2012, Ismail's family was one of the first Rohingya families to reach Chicago. Larger numbers began arriving in 2013 and '14 and have since tapered off. Chicago now hosts the largest Rohingya refugee population in the country, estimated at 1,500. The next-largest population is in Milwaukee, ➔

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with smaller clusters scattered throughout the country, according to Laura Toffenetti, assistant director of the Rohingya Cultural Center.

Toffenetti says that Chicago—with its long history of welcoming immigrants and refugees and a sizable Muslim population on Devon Street in West Ridge—is a desirable place for Rohingya to settle. The Cultural Center, which opened in 2016 at California and Devon Streets, provides social services and education to support refugee adjustment, and holds activities aiming to celebrate and preserve Rohingya language and culture.

“The biggest challenges are for the teens who arrive here with little or no education experience and [who] are put in schools [according to their] age,” says Toffenetti. She adds that many parents “have no experience being in school, so even though they value education, they are unable to help their children” progress academically. Under these circumstances, adolescents often drop out to work.

In their first three months in America, Ismail’s family received a set of core services from their resettlement agency, Heartland Alliance, in accordance with national refugee policy and aimed at promoting self-sufficiency. The services included case management, employment assistance, and apartment rental and financial assistance; they received an additional five months of social services that Heartland Alliance funds through grants and donations. Heartland Alliance’s Refugee and Immigrant Community Services office in Ravenswood supports more than 300 refugees from conflict-affected countries in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East each year.

Heartland Alliance rented the family an apartment on Devon Street in West Ridge and within three months, Ismail’s mother secured a job packing chicken at Tyson Foods. At \$10.50 per hour, it barely covered the family’s \$740 per month rent and other living expenses, so the family’s caseworker suggested that Ismail start working as well. His mother disagreed, and Ismail enrolled in Mather High School. He was 17, and could just barely graduate by Illinois’s age cutoff of 21.

When Ismail left school in Malaysia, he was just learning division and multiplication and had never formally studied English. At Mather, he needed to take the subjects required by the state to graduate. Elena Indman, Ismail’s English as a Second Language chemistry teacher, says he was the school’s first Rohingya student.

“When Habib came to Mather, I remember

his eyes,” Indman says. “The boy could not speak English, and he was just looking in the teachers’ eyes, and the eyes of students, trying to get some information.”

Struggling to grasp the basic concepts, Ismail began skipping school. By the end of the first semester, he was failing all his classes. A warning from a Bangladeshi classmate turned his outlook around: “If you don’t graduate, then you’ll have wasted your years here.” Ismail began studying at the library and staying after school to meet his teachers. By the end of the year, he had brought his grades up to Bs.

“He was sitting in my class, a student who at first could not read or write, and he was solving problems in chemistry. It was incredible,” Indman says. “Nobody spoke his language, but he figured [it] out.”

Mather, located in West Ridge, is one of Chicago’s most diverse high schools, according to the principal, Peter Auffant. The school’s 1,500 students speak more than 60 languages and represent more than 140 countries of origin. “We work hard as a staff to build a community where everyone belongs. . . . The fact that we are all so different is the one thing we all have in common,” he says. For Ismail, this diversity enabled him to establish a community. “I was able to make friends from different countries because I spoke broken English and they did the same,” he says. “People didn’t make fun of me.”

In a single classroom, Indman says, she sometimes has students who speak more than 20 languages. Many, like Ismail, have interrupted educational backgrounds or lack formal education prior to enrolling in Mather. Indman compared Ismail’s determination with other first-generation immigrants and refugees, including herself—she came to America as a refugee in the 90s from the former Soviet Union. “We are survivors,” she says.

Of Ismail, she notes, “Life brought him to the level of adult too soon.” Nonetheless, she was impressed with his desire to make up for lost time. “If he had a question, he would always ask. He was trying to close [the] gap in his education.”

Meanwhile, Ismail’s father, still unable to work, remained idle at home, while his mother worked long shifts at Tyson. “I think that frustrated [my father] the most,” Ismail says. “He would stay at home the whole day . . . He would get angry at every small thing. He would start yelling, he’d start accusing you of something you didn’t do, and he would become violent.”

When Ismail’s mother came home late one night after working an overtime shift, his father questioned her whereabouts. The dis-



“We still have people who are supporting us, who believe in equality,” Ismail says. © ANJALI PINTO

pute turned physical, and Ismail intervened. When his father threatened him with a kitchen knife, his younger sister called the police. Ismail says that the arrival of the police felt “like God had sent angels from above.” Nonetheless, he convinced his mother not to press criminal charges, because of the sacrifices his father had made for the family in Malaysia and America.

Ismail had been fascinated by law enforcement since childhood and has since taken the written and physical exams to be a Chicago po-

lice officer. “I don’t want anyone else to be in the situation I was in. I want to serve and protect the community that I’ve been living in,” he says. His mother worries about the risks, but she knows his mind can’t be changed. “She always tells me, ‘If that’s what you want to do, just go for it.’”

In 2016, Ismail became the first person in his family to graduate high school. “I still remember my mom crying, looking at me in the gown,” he says. After Ismail’s graduation, his older sister, who reached Chicago a few

years after him, moved to Milwaukee with her husband and children in search of more affordable housing and better economic prospects. Ismail's father joined them.

Ismail enrolled at Wilbur Wright College, attending morning classes and working nights at Wendy's. He now works night shifts at O'Hare International Airport as a passenger service agent for Frontier Airlines. He sleeps for a few hours and then does morning deliveries for GrubHub. Because his annual income surpasses the threshold to qualify for federal student aid, Ismail paused for two years to save money, and resumed classes this month.

Last July, Ismail became a citizen. The ceremony made him remember his childhood in Malaysia, when "I didn't have any hope, because I was in the country where I was born, and I wasn't able to get citizenship," he says. In March, he went back for the first time. Many of his former neighbors were still living in marginal conditions, struggling to find work and earn a basic living.

"Now I have a place I can call home," he says. "Coming [to America], being able to work,

being able to finish my school, being able to pursue my dreams—it means a lot."

When President Trump's travel ban went into effect in January 2017, suspending the Refugee Admissions Program and restricting the admission of citizens from seven predominantly Muslim countries, Ismail was on duty at the airport. At first he was dismayed and feared that "people don't want us in their country." His hope, however, was restored upon seeing crowds demonstrating against the ban at the arrival hall. "We still have people who are supporting us, who believe in equality," he says.

While Ismail has never set foot in Myanmar, he says he participated in the 2017 demonstrations against the plight of the Rohingya out of a sense of solidarity. "We protested so the people who were being killed, being raped, whose houses were being burned down—so that international organizations would step up and do something about it," he says. "Even though we live in a better condition now, we haven't forgotten those who are dying." 

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ARCHITECTURE

Why is the rent so damned high?

A visit to the 'Evicted' exhibit in Milwaukee

By MAYA DUKMASOYA AND ANJULIE RAO

Eviction has become a prominent topic of academic research, public debate, journalistic investigation, and artistic expression in recent years, spurred largely by the 2016 publication of sociologist Matthew Desmond's book *Evicted*. Set in Milwaukee, it painstakingly describes the lives of poor tenants and their landlords and contemplates solutions to the nation's eviction epidemic. Since the book's release, Desmond has opened the Eviction Lab, a research center at Princeton University, where he teaches, and spearheaded various projects to raise public awareness of the problem. Among them is a traveling exhibition called "Evicted," which debuted at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., and recently made its way to Milwaukee. The exhibit combines audio and visual representation of statistics and personal stories in conjunction with work by architecture students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Last weekend we took a road trip to check it out.

MAYA DUKMASOYA: I thought that the exhibit was a great way to present the basic outline of this problem to an audience that has no prior engagement. The video is short but compelling. The photographs are excellent. The data is displayed in a well-thought-out way. But I feel like this information should not be squirreled away in a little exhibition space that's open two days a week. Ideally this is the kind of thing that gets installed on the Mag Mile or Daley Plaza.

ANJULIE RAO: Listening to audio recordings from eviction court cases was impactful because you got a sense of courtroom chaos:

dozens of people, their kids, their families are all there. But I wanted to see more compelling objects like the sculpture near the entrance. It showed a collection of personal belongings wrapped in Saran Wrap, and it told the story of what it is like to be a part of an eviction. Instead of reducing eviction to a part of everyday violent bureaucratic processes, the sculpture made me see eviction as an emotional trauma.

I also totally agree with you: the house-shaped displays are visually interesting enough that you could put them in a public space. It would function beautifully and reach a much wider audience. The information stands on its own, which is why I was disappointed to see it connected with "solutions-oriented" architecture proposals from the students.

MD: Yeah, to be honest, I had a hard time taking that part of the exhibition seriously. I like looking at little models of buildings, that's cute. But it just felt jarringly theoretical. Did it have a serious purpose?



A representation of the number of eviction filings by state in 2016. © UWM PHOTO/ELORA HENNESSEY



AR: The students took a class in which they read *Evicted* and then designed model tiny homes for homeless people. Then they designed a community of those tiny homes and they finished the course by designing a large-scale institutional building that provides an ongoing homelessness support frame-

A student model of an institutional building designed to provide housing and ongoing services to homeless people. © UWM PHOTO/ELORA HENNESSEY



A model of a tiny house community constructed by UMW students in a course taught by Allyson Nemec and Joy Peot-Shields. UMW PHOTO/ ELORA HENNESSEY



"Instead of reducing eviction to a part of everyday violent bureaucratic processes, [this] sculpture made me see eviction as an emotional trauma." MAYA DUKMASOVA

work. All were on display; none were thoughtful. None of them read to me as high-quality housing.

The student work demonstrates that when architects are asked to address eviction, they immediately design for homelessness. And I think that exercise removes architects' responsibility to advocate for housing policy change. When we use design to address a population that has been traumatized, we have to ask if that design is meant to serve that population or serve the field of architecture itself. Seeing the UWM project scares me a lot because it means the next generation of

architects isn't being programmed to think holistically about who they're designing for.

MD: Even outside of designing affordable housing, which is so hard to build, I would imagine that architects can design solutions to landlords' building problems that would otherwise force them to raise rents.

AR: Architects are really good at translating very complicated federal and state assistance into digestible actionable items. Architects who do affordable housing have an intimate knowledge of federal housing policy. And if they can use that knowledge and actually point out what's wrong with it, or inefficient about it, they should be brought to the table in those policy conversations.

MD: Presenting eviction with evictees at the center, like the exhibition does is, on the one hand, necessary so people understand just how bad this is as a phenomenon. Yet it makes it seem like a natural disaster. But you can't ignore the filthy lucre and the very real exploitation that happens in the rental market. Desmond's book makes sure that you're thinking about the landlord throughout, but the part of the exhibition that was about landlords didn't go as far. Did you see that 37 percent of the real estate transactions in 2016 were homes sold to people who weren't living in them? I just feel like that's the central tension here. We know very little about how landlords operate, what kind of money they make. Desmond has this podcast now with *On the Media* about eviction, and in it he phrases it very eloquently: How much is enough profit? Where do we draw the line on "reasonable" landlord income? And if there is no ceiling on profit, then is housing something that should be subject to that kind of logic?

AR: Which is why it's so painful to see realtors call the homes that they are selling "product."

MD: There are people who are creating the problem through the choices they're making. The landlords are not just market or rational actors. They are people who operate through motivations like greed and fear. We just don't know enough about them. And we're at a point now where it's critical to know more because we need to figure out what kind of solution is going to be most effective at dealing with the fact that the rent is way too fucking expensive. Other than raising the minimum wage, which when it gets raised, it doesn't get raised enough.

AR: And when it does housing costs go up.

MD: Right, why are the housing costs going up? We don't know that because we don't subject landlords to any kind of reporting requirements. We don't know why they're charging what they are. Meanwhile every policy proposal targeting profit is going to be met with unqualified backlash from the real estate people saying, "No, this is going to make things worse."

AR: Which is why every person can theoretically get behind the call for "more affordable housing"—which is, I hate to say, very misleading.

MD: It is, because it doesn't necessarily mean anything. People assume that it means building something, but building something is very expensive. And meanwhile, there's an endless supply of impoverished tenants for housing that's already built and it's affordable and would never be competing with potential new housing. The last I heard, there is nowhere in America where rent is affordable to someone making minimum wage. I am so much less interested in *How do we build more affordable housing* than I am in *How do we curb profiteering and make existing housing affordable?*

AR: That's the question.

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VISUAL ART

Blue stars

Quilts of Valor pieces together a way to honor military vets.

By EMILY MCTAVISH

A sewing machine whirrs and an iron pumps out steam. A small band of women sorts a pile of donated fabrics into reds, whites, blues, and golds of varying shades, removing pinks, greens, and purples. Then this group, joined by an occasional man on ironing duty, will sew the patriotic fabrics into quilts for American veterans and service members at monthly Quilts of Valor sew-ins at the National Veterans Art Museum in Portage Park.

Morgan Holtz, the founder of the Chicago group, discovered Quilts of Valor (QOV) on Facebook in early 2018 and requested a quilt for her father, George. George had joined the air force in 1962 at age 19, and during the Vietnam war he served as a mechanic based in South Korea.

George's quilt—made of muted creams, blues, and reds in a Roman Stripes pattern—was a surprise for him a year after he suffered a stroke and lost most of his mobility and speech. Holtz has been his primary caretaker with help from her brother and a certified nursing assistant.

Their situation is different from that of other families, Holtz says, but being part of QOV has deepened her pride in her father's service and her gratitude for other veterans.

"Many of these veterans feel alone, and to have strangers reach out and thank them is powerful," Holtz says.

While researching QOV, Holtz found the nearest chapter was in suburban Aurora, which inspired her to form a city group in August 2018.

The organization, though, has been around for more than 15 years. Catherine Roberts of Seaford, Delaware, started QOV after her son was deployed to Iraq in 2003. She wanted to give thanks and honor service members with handmade quilts. A soldier who had lost his

leg in Iraq and was recuperating at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland, received the first quilt.

Since then, more than 200,000 quilts have been donated in all 50 states. The organization's reach has extended to Canada, the UK, and Australia.

The Chicago group currently has about ten members "crafting with a purpose," Holtz says. They meet monthly, traveling from various parts of the city to the museum, where they set up sewing machines and cutting boards among the exhibits.

In May the quilters focused on creating kits of ironed precut fabrics to make quilt blocks of a pattern called Ohio Stars. The kits will go to quilters who may pass through during a sew-in or who don't have time to meet at the museum.

This year, Holtz says, the Chicago chapter has made a dozen quilt tops to be finished by other Illinois members with long-arm sewing machines.

Some of the Chicago women who joined the group have made direct connections with service members. Renee Stuedemann found the monthly sew-ins after volunteering with the organization from home for five years.

"I figured this was perfect for me because I like doing the piecing," Stuedemann says. "And of course, I love supporting veterans while doing something I love."

Seeing the veterans react to the quilts can be quite moving. Stuedemann herself became choked up as she presented a quilt to army veteran Charles E. Thomas, a fellow member of Pilgrim Lutheran Church in North Center, earlier this spring.

During his 16 years in the service, Thomas was sent on tours in Iraq and Kuwait. He often thinks of the other servicemen and -women before him.

"Sometimes I wish I could go wake those World War I veterans up and tell them what they missed," he says.

Holtz said her next project is to start another chapter in the Elmhurst area, accessible to the quilters between Chicago and Aurora.

"It's fun to see everyone collaborating, and I think that's why people are coming back," Holtz says. "It's as much about the purpose of doing the quilt as it is being in the community that enjoys the craft." 

 @EmMcT

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George Holtz poses for a portrait with his Quilt of Valor in his Bloomingdale, Illinois, home on June 1, 2019.  EMILY MCTAVISH



Renee Stuedemann rolls up fabric for the binding of a quilt during a sew-in for the Chicago Quilts of Valor chapter on May 18, 2019 at the National Museum of Veterans Art.  EMILY MCTAVISH

"JUST KITTEN AROUND"

Sat 7/6, 6:30 PM, Windy Kitty Cat Cafe,
1746 W. North, windykittychicago.com, \$20.

ARTS & CULTURE

Dan White PINAR ISTEK



COMEDY

The toughest audience in town

At the stand-up show 'Just Kitten Around,' the worst hecklers are the cats.

By BRIANNA WELLEN



Elsie How introduces the first performer. PINAR ISTEK

It's pretty hard to impress a cat. They are notoriously apathetic and play by their own rules. Only something as complex as a laser or as simple as a can of tuna will keep their attention, and even that is fleeting. So what happens when a group of stand-ups try to perform comedy to a room full of cats?

The monthly comedy show "Just Kitten Around" at Windy Kitty Cat Cafe in Bucktown is technically geared toward humans—guests have 30 minutes to play with the cats before the stand-up begins. But during the June show nearly every comic who went up had something to say to or about the cats. Host Alex ➔

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Collyard gave a PowerPoint presentation about what cats are made of (small rocks, goop, filth). Megan Hosack sang about being a cat lady. And Luis Arevalo confronted a particularly grumpy-looking gray cat sitting in the front row.

Collyard and Elsie How started “Just Kitten Around” as a fund-raiser for the Catcade cat cafe in Lakeview in February 2018. Last month they moved the show to Windy Kitty, home of the city’s very first kitten nursery. The cats at both venues are up for adoption, and anyone can make a reservation to spend time with the cats playing, petting, or squealing because they’re just so cute.

Both Collyard and How are cat lovers but not cat owners, and saw the show as an opportunity to spend more time with some feline friends. There was a bit of a learning

curve. “One time I was playing the piano and I had a cat jump, graze my ear like it was a bullet, and then land on my piano while I was playing and doing the show,” Collyard says.

They soon learned to pitch some of their more involved bits, like singing a song about every cat with live accompaniment, and to keep it simple. “It’s enough to just be in a room full of cats and telling jokes,” How says.

While the cats are an obvious distraction to the crowd, Collyard and How say that having them in the room actually makes people better audience members. Everyone is immediately relaxed, ready to have a good time, and extremely respectful.

“The cats are maybe the biggest hecklers,” Collyard says, “and you know what? We love them for it.”

@BriannaWellen



A cat hangs out in front of the window.
PINAR ISTEK



Grindr the Opera HEATHER MALL

OPENING

Aloha!

Folks Operetta revives *Flower of Hawaii*, a frothy fantasy that first bloomed in prewar Berlin.

This operetta by composer Paul Abrahám and librettists Alfred Grünwald, Fritz Löhner-Beda, and Emmerich Földes (translated here by Gerald Frantzen) was a big hit in 1931 Berlin. The far-fetched story, set in Hawaii, then a U.S. territory, concerns a romantic triangle tinged with political tension. A plan to restore Hawaiian sovereignty revolves around the imminent arrival of Princess Laya, heir to the Hawaiian throne, who has been living in exile in Paris. Laya (Marisa Buchheit) shows up disguised as a French cabaret star, accompanied by American jazz singer Jimmy Fox (Trent Oldham). Laya has been betrothed since childhood to the Hawaiian prince Lilo-Taro (Rodell Rosel), and Hawaiian nationalists hope their marriage will inspire resistance to American imperialism. But Laya has fallen in love with Captain Reginald Stone (Nick Pulikowski), commander of the American military vessel that brought her back to her homeland; if she marries Lilo-Taro, it will be Stone’s duty to arrest her.

Folks Operetta, a company dedicated to reviving long-neglected works by Jewish writers whose careers—and sometimes lives—were cut short by the rise of Nazism, delivers an elaborate and ambitious production of this frothy fantasy, written just two years before Hitler’s rise to power forced the Hungarian Jewish composer Abrahám to flee Germany. The show’s main draw is its tuneful, catchy score, packed with sentimental waltzes, jaunty fox trots, rousing marches, and syncopated jazz. The excellent 19-piece orchestra led by conductor Anthony Barrese features the evocative sounds of Hawaiian guitar and ragtime piano. There’s plenty of energetic dancing and lots of lovely singing, despite some occasional problems with the acoustic balance between the vocalists and the onstage orchestra. —ALBERT WILLIAMS *FLOWER OF HAWAII* Through 7/14: Fri-Sat 7:30 PM, Sun 2 PM, Stage 773, 1225 W. Belmont, 847-609-2939, folksoperetta.org, \$40, \$35 seniors, \$30 students.

Who’s your daddy?

For a good time, come all over the dating satire *Grindr the Opera*.

Looking for a good time? One night of fun that you will likely soon forget? NSA? Some BDSM and possible VBD? Then come all over *Grindr the Opera* at Pride Films and Plays, a comedic skewering of the modern gay-dating scene. This well-written, over-the-top musical by Erik Ransom stars Grindr (Bruno Rivera), an operatic siren who lures four gay archetypes as her aficionados: Devon (Justin Cavazos), the starry-eyed idealist; Tom (Ben Broughton), the experienced skeptic; Jack (Evan Wilhelm), the adventurous twink; and Don (director John Cardone), the in-the-closet daddy. Their dating lives all intersect in funny and often destructive ways.

The 90-minute show moves at a firm pace, utilizing every rhyme for male genitalia and sex acts while both celebrating the freedom offered by the dating app and lamenting its downsides. These include the expression of male sexuality, gay or straight, through the metaphors of hunting and conquering, and the emotional impact of infidelity even amid rampant promiscuity.

Each song gets extensive choreography, a delightful highlight not always present in many black-box theaters, though the execution is loose and scattered. The humorous moments, including exaggerated simulated sex, enhance the dance numbers. Rivera is a powerful soprano (the only real “opera”-level performance), and both Cavazos and Broughton as the romantic liaisons have wonderful voices. While their relationship explores poignant issues of monogamy and love, it’s Wilhelm’s and Cardone’s characters who explore the darker side, struggling with issues of age, abuse, STDs, and honesty in a world of deception. —JOSH FLANDERS *GRINDR THE OPERA* Through 7/28: Thu 8 PM, Fri-Sat 10 PM, Sun 8 PM, no performance Thu 7/4, Pride Arts Center, 4147 N. Broadway, 866-811-4111, pridefilm-sandplays.com, \$30-\$40, \$20 students, seniors, and military (not valid Sat).



Midsommar

REVIEW

Things that go bump in the midnight sun

Midsommar is nothing more than a dressed-up piece of Scandinavian schlock.

By **BEN SACHS**

Ari Aster's *Hereditary* (2018) was a promising debut feature, with suggestive atmosphere, compelling performances, and (for a horror film) sensitive observations about the nature of grief. But on the basis of Aster's second feature, *Midsommar*, I'm inclined to say that promise is all the writer-director has to offer. *Midsommar* recycles the memorable qualities of *Hereditary*, but to no meaningful end. Aster simply employs them to generate a sense of gravitas, which he dashes as soon as *Midsommar* transforms into a full-blown horror movie. The film operates as an extended bait-and-switch game, as Aster establishes the veneer of an art movie only to draw viewers into what is essentially exploitation fare.

That veneer, moreover, is pretty thin. As a director Aster has only a few tricks up his sleeve, the most prominent being a slow Steadicam shot meant to instill an air of dread into the scene no matter what's happening. This device, familiar from numerous recent American horror films (not just *Hereditary*), has

been losing its power for years, yet Aster employs it in nearly every scene of *Midsommar*. Beyond suggesting a failure of imagination, the monotonous aesthetic works against its own intentions, calling attention to its own hollow artistry instead of any suspense inherent in the drama. The drama comes across as hollow too, as Aster simply bangs away on the grief theme he established in *Hereditary*; this suggests it's the only way he knows how to access his characters' feelings.

Aster defines the heroine of *Midsommar*, Dani (Florence Pugh), by her grief fairly early on, and this quickly becomes the only means by which the audience can understand her. Dani is a psychology student at an unspecified university. When the movie opens, she's shown to be in frequent contact with her mentally ill sister, who often sends her text messages that threaten she's about to have a nervous breakdown. Dani has trouble handling the stressful situation, and she relies heavily on her boyfriend, Christian (Jack Reynor), for emotional support. Christian is tired of being used as a

crutch, but he can't bring himself to break up with Dani—understandably, he doesn't want to be perceived as a bad guy. Aster establishes the couple's relationship naturally, portraying both sides sympathetically, though he reduces Dani's sister (who never appears onscreen) to something of a bogeyman, a narrative catalyst for the troubled romance. The weakness of this characterization becomes more pronounced when the sister murders her parents, then commits suicide, intensifying Dani's mental instability nearly to the point of psychosis.

Aster then jumps ahead several months to summer. Christian, who's working toward a PhD in anthropology and who lives with three other anthropology students, does little more than get high and complain about how unhappy he is with Dani, who remains traumatized by the sordid events of the past winter. One of Christian's roommates, a Swede named Pelle (Vilhelm Blomgren), invites Christian and their two other friends on a trip to the commune in northern Sweden where he grew up. Pelle wants his friends to experience an ancient midsummer festival that his commune celebrates; one of the roommates, Josh (William Jackson Harper), especially likes the idea because he wants to write his thesis on European folk rituals. Christian intends to go without telling Dani about it, but when she finds out about his plan, she guilt-trips him into inviting her along. This narrative development (which lasts so long as to feel like a short film in itself) allows Aster to demonstrate his understanding of troubled romantic relationships and how individuals can exploit

their grief to draw favors out of others; it also has little to do with what follows.

The remainder of *Midsommar* plays like a high-toned version of Eli Roth's xenophobic gore-fests *Hostel* (2005) and *The Green Inferno* (2013), following the American tourists (and a couple of British students they meet along the way) as they come to realize that Pelle's seemingly peaceful commune is really a death-obsessed cult. Aster prolongs this revelation for as long as he can, drawing out the story with observations of folk rituals and more moody camerawork. Some of his set pieces are effective, in particular the sequence that occurs when the Americans first arrive at the commune and take psychedelic mushrooms. Aster employs subtle special effects to convey the mushrooms' disorienting effects on Dani, who freaks out and becomes suspicious of everyone around her. This sequence also has little to do with what follows, apart from raising the belabored level of dread that Aster has already conjured.

One of the more interesting things about *Midsommar* is that, because it takes place in northern Sweden during the summer, the horror generally occurs under bright skies. This strategy inverts the standard horror-movie trope of having scary things happen in the dark and, as a result, makes one regard sunlight with suspicion, something I've rarely encountered in the genre. Still, I didn't find the film particularly unsettling. For all the cleverness with which Aster and company realize the commune (Henrik Svensson's production design is especially praiseworthy), the setting never really induces terror—it's simply too pretty. Moreover, Aster renders the communards and their rituals too alien for them to get under one's skin. Once *Midsommar* introduces the idea that something strange is afoot at the commune, the film idles until the unusual behavior turns grotesque and violent. Aster introduces a subplot about Christian and Josh's academic rivalry, but this doesn't do anything but maintain the flimsy illusion that the filmmaker is interested in his characters beyond their victimhood. When Dani's grief, which had motored the drama of the film's first half, stops being a factor in the narrative, it becomes clear where Aster's interests lie. A dressed-up piece of schlock, *Midsommar* might have been compelling in its pretense if Aster weren't such a one-note storyteller. **F**

🐦 @1bsachs



Yesterday

ESSAY

Abbey Road on Lawrence Avenue

The Beatles, *Yesterday*, and finding home

By NINA LI COOMES

In Danny Boyle's new film *Yesterday*, a struggling musician named Jack (Himesh Patel) wakes up after being hit by a bus during a 12-second global blackout to discover he is the only person in the world who remembers the Beatles. After a brief will-he-won't-he, Jack relaunched his failing career to stunning success by claiming the songs of Lennon and McCartney as his own.

But the success isn't enough for Jack, who was listless and unmoored even before his musical triumph, trying to figure out just where and how he belonged. The film offers a sideways solution, peppering a narrative about rock stardom with scenes in intimate, domestic settings: a conversation with Ed Sheeran (played by none other than Ed Sheeran) in Jack's parents' quotidian kitchen, impassioned rehearsals in a cluttered adolescent bedroom, the mundane dreariness of a local grocery store where Jack initially works part-time. All these scenes juxtaposing Jack's restlessness with images of people who are static and anchored, at home in themselves as much as in their own living rooms, underscore the theme of home going. As Jack's renditions of globally beloved Beatles classics play, they intermingle with our hero's journey in discov-

ering just where he ought to be. In *Yesterday*, the music of the Beatles acts as a guiding light, an auditory pathway toward a semblance of home.

Though *Yesterday* struggles with an unwieldy, fablelike plot and ultimately neglects an interesting premise for tired rom-com tropes, the idea of the Beatles and their connection to home was something that resonated with me. When I think about my first days in Chicago, and how it became a place where I felt I belonged, the soundtrack that plays is one by John, Paul, George, and Ringo. I realize this seems completely nonsensical; the Beatles were Liverpudlians from across the pond. They heralded the British Invasion of the 1960s with their flippant bowl cuts and wide, shallow vowels. Geographically speaking, there's no reason for the Beatles to be at all associated with Chicago, though they did perform here in 1964, 1965, and 1966 to a total audience of more than 150,000 people. They counted American artists like Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Elvis as influences, but their sound had no real ties to the Chicago sounds of blues and jazz. New York, with its worldly glamour and direct link to Lennon's later years, seems a more apt fit. And yet, for

me, when I am reminded of all that I love about this City of the Big Shoulders, it is the Beatles that act as chorus.

When my family first moved to the United States in 2000, we landed in a rural, all-white area of Illinois. As a seven-year-old half-Japanese, half-white girl, I had just left the homogeneity of Japan, where I'd been alienated for being mixed race, only to find that the community where we had planted ourselves in the U.S. was similarly monotone, with microaggressions and isolation to match. The first years of my life here were hard ones, marked by anxiety and sorrow spurred by the belief that I was not as human as my white peers. After four years of trying (and failing) to make it work in the all-white cornfields, my parents made the decision to move our family to Albany Park.

Immediately, it was apparent to me that our new home was different. Orthodox Jews in their raven-colored hats threaded the street, sharing sidewalks with Muslims in their hijabs and white taqiyahs. Two Swedish American shops stood side by side on Foster where blond, blue-eyed descendants of earlier immigrants cheerfully ordered open-faced meatball sandwiches dressed in doe-colored gravy. On our block, kids shouted in Spanish as they chased after the paleta man, the bells on his cart a gleeful jangle, so much more inviting than the droning loop of "Turkey in the Straw" played by the ice cream truck. The public library on the corner had a dedicated room for Korean-language books, a room where I would later spend countless hours flipping through thick glossy magazines, each page slick and cool to the touch, marveling at how easily I could now find published photos of Asian women.

At nighttime—at least for the first few awe-filled weeks—my family would pile wordlessly into our silver Honda CRV. In my childish recollection, this memory is touched with magic, as if we are all drawn into the car by some invisible force, my dad in the driver's seat, my mother in the passenger's, my sister and I sitting behind them. My dad would turn the key in the ignition, slide a CD into the player, and as the car pulled away from its spot for our nightly drives down Lawrence Avenue, the percussive *shoop* of "Come Together" would come through the speakers, followed by McCartney's insistent bass and Lennon's surrealist lyrics. We would pull onto Lawrence as the moody timbre broke open into the messianic chorus—"Come together, right now, over me"—everyone in the car silent as we glided down the street.

It was summer, and so our windows were rolled down to better see the lit-up signs. Usually, there'd be some traffic, but this suited us as George Harrison's ethereal "Something" warbled. The point of these *Abbey Road* car rides was to be enraptured by our jewellike neighborhood. Maxwell's silver hammer came down as I gawked at the glittering showcase of finery in a display window, the headless mannequins wearing bell-shaped quinceañera dresses. My sister and I would bellow along to "Oh! Darling," taking care not to close our eyes too long in our fits of emotional singing so as not to miss the cozy glow of diners in the pupuseria. To the rakish piano of "You Never Give Me Your Money," we marveled at blankets emblazoned with wolf faces spread out for eager shoppers. The pastel enticement of the paleteria accompanied "Polythene Pam," the stoicism of the river slid past to "Golden Slumbers." At the end of the night, as we tumbled out of the car, my sister and I would sing "Her Majesty" to each other, alternating lines as my parents turned the key in the lock. The Beatles ushered us night after night into a reverie of gratitude, from the first sounds of *Abbey Road* to its closing, acting as the hymn for our feverish thankfulness that we now lived in Chicago. (Later I asked my dad why we listened to *Abbey Road*. It turned out there was no reason at all.)

Those nights are why when I think about this city, the album that plays in the background of my mind is always *Abbey Road*. It's why last night when I watched Jack race up a street in Suffolk to record his rendition of "I Want to Hold Your Hand," I was reminded of listening to that song while riding my bicycle up Kedzie in high school, thinking feverishly of the dark-haired boy I so hoped would ask me to dance at the Back to School Dance. Or why when Jack played "In My Life" for a local talk show, I was immediately transported back to my wedding, dancing to the harpsichord solo with my father like lunatics. In some ways, this is just what good music does: it attaches itself to something, someone, some place, some feeling in our lives, and shows us something true. In *Yesterday*, that music is by the Beatles, and the true thing it eventually shows is where one finds home. For me, it was the same music, but the home it cast a light on was this at times broken, always beautiful saving grace of a city. 📍

🐦 @nlcoomes

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FILM



Toni Morrison: *The Pieces I Am*

NOW PLAYING

RR Ball of Fire

Howard Hawks's 1941 version of "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" is a delight, as showgirl Barbara Stanwyck moves in with seven prissy professors (headed by Gary Cooper) who are compiling a dictionary of slang. Far superior to Hawks's 1948 remake, *A Song Is Born*. Written by Charles Brackett and Billy Wilder; with Oscar Homolka, Dana Andrews, Dan Duryea, S.Z. Sakall, Richard Haydn, and Gene Krupa. —**DON DRUKER** 111 min. 16 mm. Thu 7/11, 7 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

RR Before Stonewall: The Making of a Gay and Lesbian Community

Joining *Paris Is Burning* (1990) and *How to Survive a Plague* (2012) in the top tier of documentaries concerning LGBTQ+ history and culture, this 1984 film relays queer experiences in the half millennium preceding the Stonewall uprising of 1969, an event many recognize as the public debut of the gay rights movement in the United States. Codirectors Greta Schiller and Robert Rosenberg utilize revealing interviews with gay elders and riveting archival footage to recount an essential story about a once secret and scattered group living on the fringes of heteronormative society. Political activist Harry Hay describes how gay men cruised each other in the 1920s and '30s—wearing a red necktie, for example, so that a similarly inclined man might approach and ask a coded question like "Do you have a match?"—while feminist writer and civil rights activist Audre Lorde calls out white lesbians for empathizing with her in private but never standing up for her in public. The documentary probes these intersections and prioritizes the stories of ordinary citizens alongside gay icons such as Lorde and Allen Ginsberg to illuminate a subculture during its push

from the "twilight world" of the demimonde into the light of the broader social sphere. Their collective struggle for acceptance and equality, replete with indignities that seem to chase every hard-won fight, continues with the current generation. —**LEAH PICKETT** 87 min. UIC professor and adviser to the film *John D'Emilio and activist Marge Summit attend the Sunday screening. Fri 7/5, 2 and 8:30 PM; Sat 7/6, 8:15 PM; Sun 7/7, 5:15 PM; Mon 7/8, 6 PM; and Wed 7/10, 8:30 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

RR Bottle Rocket

Wes Anderson's 1996 first feature (before *Rushmore* and *The Royal Tenenbaums*) is fresh, character driven, often funny, and unfashionably upbeat (as well as offbeat). And it doesn't beat you over the head—which made it a hard sell in industry terms and explains why it was almost completely ignored upon release. But I found its Kerouac-like goofiness both charming and sustaining. Owen Wilson, his brother Luke, and Robert Musgrave play three young, immature friends and aspiring thieves in Texas; another Wilson brother, Andrew, also appears, and the film benefits from its relaxed cast consisting largely of friends and siblings. (The presence of such producer godparents as Polly Platt, James L. Brooks, Monte Hellman, and L.M. Kit Carson probably helped as well.) Written by Anderson and Owen Wilson; with James Caan and Lumi Cavazos (*Like Water for Chocolate*). —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** R, 91 min. Tue 7/9-Wed 7/10, 11 PM; and Thu 7/11, 10:30 PM. Logan

RR Chunhyang

Set in the late 18th century, this dazzling epic by Im Kwon-taek (*Fly High Run Far*) concerns the love between a prostitute's daughter and the son of a provincial governor, who marry in secret but are then driven apart. Im is Korea's most prestigious filmmaker (with about 100 features to his credit), and his stirring 2000 drama is both historically resonant and strikingly modern, remarkable for its deft and spellbinding narrative, its breathtaking color, and above all its traditional

sung narration, which he periodically shows being performed with drum accompaniment before a contemporary audience. This is one of those masterpieces that would qualify as a musical if Hollywood propagandists hadn't claimed the genre as their personal property. A must-see. In Korean with subtitles. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** R, 120 min. 35 mm. Fri 7/5, 7 and 9:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

Coraline

Tim Burton, who wrote the story for *The Nightmare Before Christmas* (1993), has since topped it with another animated chiller, *Corpse Bride* (2005), while Henry Selick, who directed *Nightmare*, has been struggling to better it ever since. Like his *James and the Giant Peach* (1996), this is adapted from a popular children's fantasy—Neil Gaiman's 2002 horror novella *Coraline*, which won the Hugo and Nebula Awards. The intrepid Coraline, frustrated with her parents after they move her to a new town, discovers a portal to an alternate universe where everyone has buttons sewn over their eyes. It's the first stop-motion feature filmed entirely in stereoscopic 3-D, and the technique makes Selick's artwork even more wondrously creepy. The problem is Gaiman's story, which keeps accumulating otherworldly mythology but doesn't establish a clear line of action in the home stretch (2009). Among the voice talent are Dakota Fanning, Teri Hatcher, John Hodgman, and Ian McShane. —**J.R. JONES** PG, 100 min. Wed 7/10, 7:30 PM. Beverly Arts Center

Escape From New York

It's a rare film that has so many ideas and yet fails so consistently to make use of them. John Carpenter has marshaled a warehouseful of surefire action concepts in this futuristic adventure (1981) about one man's attempt to rescue the president, who's crash-landed in the middle of Manhattan, now a prison complex. The movie is never less than entertaining, but it fails to satisfy—it gives us too little of too much. Oddly, much of its pleasure is in the acting, which up to this point hadn't been Carpenter's strong suit: Donald Pleasence, Adrienne Barbeau, and Harry Dean Stanton offer excellent turns. It's less than you'd expect from Carpenter, but what the hell: Who else ever knew how to light Lee Van Cleef? With Kurt Russell, Ernest Borgnine, and Isaac Hayes. —**DAVE KEHR** R, 99 min. Music Box

RR Hard Boiled

John Woo's violent crime thriller (1992) stars Chow Yun-fat as a tough Hong Kong cop who loses his best friend and partner in a teahouse shoot-out and joins forces with a hired killer (Tony Leung) who appears to operate on both sides of the law. Choreographically stunning like most of Woo's work, especially before he headed west. In Cantonese with subtitles. —**JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** R, 128 min. 35 mm. Sat 7/6, 7 and 9:30 PM. Univ. of Chicago Doc Films

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It Happened One Night

Reporter Clark Gable chases spoiled heiress Claudette Colbert across most of the eastern seaboard, pausing long enough between wisecracks to set the definitive tone of 30s screwball comedy. Frank Capra's 1934 film won all five of the top Oscars, but it's still pretty good. This is Capra at his best, very funny and very light, with a minimum of populist posturing. **—DAVE KEHR** 105 min. *Fri 7/5, 4 PM; Sat 7/6, 2:30 PM; and Thu 7/11, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Klute

As close to a classic as anything New Hollywood produced, Alan Pakula's 1971 film tells of a small-town detective who comes to New York in search of a friend's killer. The trail leads to a tough-minded hooker who can't understand the cop's determination. Donald Sutherland works small and subtly, balancing Jane Fonda's flashy virtuoso technique. **—DAVE KEHR** *R*, 114 min. 35 mm. *Nathan Holmes, author of Welcome to Fear City: Crime Film, Crisis and the Urban Imagination, attends the screening. Mon 7/8, 7 PM. Music Box*

Leto

I can understand why writer-director Kirill Serebrennikov—who was banned from making movies in Russia after his incendiary satire *The Student* (2016)—wanted to make a film about Leningrad's underground rock scene in the final years of the Soviet Union; he probably felt a sense of kinship with the artists of that movement, who used their medium to communicate dissatisfaction with the dominant social order. Given Serebrennikov's sincere investment in the material and the liveliness of his filmmaking here, I wish I liked the movie more. But I couldn't get past how egregiously this cribbs from two films about British underground rock, Michael Winterbottom's *24 Hour Party People* (2002) and Anton Corbijn's *Control* (2007). Serebrennikov rips off the former film by having characters break the fourth wall to acknowledge when the story draws from rumors instead of confirmed fact; the influence of the latter can be felt in the high-contrast black-and-white widescreen cinematography. If you can disregard the derivativeness, this

has some decent music and charismatic performances, and it provides some insights into the Western aspirations of Soviet youth culture. In Russian with subtitles. **—BEN SACHS** 126 min. *Fri 7/5, 6 PM; Sat 7/6, 7:30 PM; Sun 7/7, 3 PM; Mon 7/8, 7:45 PM; Tue 7/9, 8 PM; Wed 7/10, 6 PM; and Thu 7/11, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Mortal Kombat

I haven't seen it, but the title, designer misspelling and all, should tell you all you need to know about this blood-and-guts SF action adventure, complete with evil sorcerer, special effects, and gory tournaments (1995). Paul Anderson directed Kevin Droney's script, and the cast includes Linden Ashby, Cary-Hiroyuki Tagawa, Robin Shou, Bridgette Wilson, Talisa Soto, Trevor Goddard, and Christopher Lambert. **—READER STAFF** *PG-13, 101 min. Fri 7/5-Mon 7/8, 11 PM. Logan*

My Man Godfrey

Gregory La Cava's improvisational style received its highest critical acclaim for this 1936 film, a marginally Marxist exercise in class confusion during the Depression. Carole Lombard is the bubbleheaded heiress who needs an oppressed proletarian to round out a scavenger hunt; she picks up tramp William Powell and lets him stay on to be her butler. Meanwhile, mad poet Mischa Auer assumes the role of the intelligentsia under late capitalism by imitating a gorilla. With Alice Brady, Eugene Pallette, and Gail Patrick. **—DAVE KEHR** 94 min. 35 mm. *Sat 7/6, 4:30 PM, and Tue 7/9, 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Ophelia

One facet of Shakespeare's mostly timeless *Hamlet* has not aged well, and that is the fuzzy, underwritten role of Ophelia, the doomed lover of the titular Danish prince. The lacunae in her story have long ached to be filled, which makes this reimagining of the classic tale from Ophelia's perspective first and foremost an overdue curiosity. The film itself, on its hazily lit surface, is as beautiful and shrewd as its heroine (Daisy Ridley) and the queen she serves (Naomi Watts). But when each new year brings at least one new Shakespeare adaptation to the stage or screen, it helps to offer something more

than a fresh take, like a singular visual style or inventive storytelling mode. Though it's refreshing to see the angry men of *Hamlet* filtered through a female gaze, director Claire McCarthy and screenwriter Semi Challas play it safe with the film's rather conventional aesthetic, setting, structure, and tone. Bursts of cheekiness and even some silliness are welcome when they arrive, but overall, the picture is nowhere near as memorable as other more controversial twists on misunderstood women of history and fiction, or a combination of the two. Take for example, Sofia Coppola's eye-catching and heart-pummeling satire *Marie Antoinette* (2006), which contains individual shots that hit harder than anything conjured here. **—LEAH PICKETT** *PG-13, 106 min. Fri 7/5, 3:45 and 7:45 PM; Sat 7/6, 3 and 5:15 PM; Sun 7/7, 5:30 PM; Mon 7/8, 7:45 PM; Tue 7/9, 6 PM; Wed 7/10, 8 PM; and Thu 7/11 6 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

Poetic Justice

Though it's not unlikable, John Singleton's 1993 second feature (*Boyz n the Hood* was his first) is an unholy mess in almost every respect. There's a line in the final credits saying that, for the purposes of copyright, Columbia Pictures is the author of this film, so maybe Columbia and not Singleton should be held accountable for the meandering and badly told (if occasionally suggestive) love story about a hairdresser-poet (Janet Jackson) and a postman (Tupac Shakur) from South Central LA who take a trip up to Oakland in a mail truck with another couple, bringing all their ghetto-bred problems with them. The title comes from the poet's name, Justice, and though Jackson shows a lot of charm in the role, it's often hard to relate the poetry she's supposed to have written (which is read mainly off-screen) to her character. (In fact, the poems are by Maya Angelou, who's around to play a bit part.) After a deceptively funny and offbeat beginning, the movie keeps restarting; each new start shows some promise, and Singleton's talent never really deserts him—but the parts don't come together to create a unified story. With Regina King, Joe Torry, Roger Guenveur Smith, and Tyra Ferrell. **—JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** *R*, 109 min. *Fri 7/5-Sat 7/6, midnight. Music Box*

Rosewood

Ving Rhames plays Mann, a rootless veteran who happens to hit town the day a rumor spreads that a Black convict has escaped from a nearby prison, in this 1997 melodrama based on a real-life massacre in the predominantly Black Florida town of Rosewood. Larger than life, Mann is emotionally inaccessible—we're not entirely sure he's who he says he is—and the motivation of most of the Black characters is one-note, ultimately preventing the story from providing much perspective on the devastating piece of history it exploits. Directed by John Singleton (*Boyz n the Hood*). **—LISA ALSPECTOR** *R*, 140 min. 35 mm. *Tue 7/9, 7 PM. Music Box*

Satan Met a Lady

An inferior and unacknowledged adaptation of Dashiell Hammett's *The Maltese Falcon*, with a ram's horn replacing the falcon. William Dieterle directed this 1936 feature; with Bette Davis, Warren William, and Alison Skipworth. **—JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** 74 min. 35 mm archival print. *Sun 7/7, 11:30 AM. Music Box*

The Scarlet Letter

Lillian Gish gives a landmark performance in this 1926 version of the Hawthorne novel, directed by emigrant Swede Victor Sjöström (with whom Gish made the superior *The Wind* in 1927). Something in the Hawthorne lends itself to film (there have been a dozen

adaptations): it's movie size, with powerful imagery and strong contrasts, a subject both theatrical and intimate. Sjöström's remains the definitive effort. With Lars Hanson, Karl Dane, and Henry B. Walthall. **—DAVE KEHR** 100 min. 35 mm archival print. *Dennis Scott provides live accompaniment. Sat 7/6, 11:30 AM. Music Box*

Spider-Man: Far From Home

There are worse ways to spend two hours than watching Spider-Man save the world again. At the very least, *Spider-Man: Far From Home* provides precisely the sort of eye-popping escapism that's endemic to summer movies. We enter the latest chapter in the Marvel-verse as Peter Parker/Spider-Man (Tom Holland) and his adolescent peers (including Jacob Batalon as a sassy/wise sidekick and Zendaya as Peter's love interest MJ) are preparing for a transoceanic class trip, a setup that provides plenty of opportunities for the most spectacularly scenic devastation this side of the Notre Dame fire. Director Jon Watts checks all the boxes: tons of stuff blows up and monsters made of towering infernos and Poseidon-worthy water spouts threaten our teen hero. There's a twist involving Mysterio (Jake Gyllenhaal) that's entertaining even though you'll totally see it coming. There's a grand finale smackdown when evil is trounced, but not completely enough to rule out a sequel. The best part of *Far From Home* is Samuel L. Jackson, whose Nick Fury single-handedly elevates the movie from a C to a B+. And for those mourning the loss of Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.) in *Avengers: Endgame*, know that he is not wholly gone and neither are his special superpower spectacles. **—CATEY SULLIVAN** *PG-13, 129 min. Dine-in Block 37, Arclight, Century 12 and CineArts 6, Chatham 14, Cicero Showplace 14, City North 14, Ford City, Harper Theater, Lake Theatre, Navy Pier IMAX, New 400, River East 21, Showplace 14 Galewood Crossings, Showplace ICON, 600 N. Michigan, Webster Place 11*

The Taking of Pelham One Two Three

A superior exercise in urban paranoia (1974). The superb location work of director Joseph Sargent goes a long way toward tempering the artificialities of the plot, which concerns an attempt to hold a subway train for ransom. With Walter Matthau, Robert Shaw, and Martin Balsam. **—DAVE KEHR** *R*, 104 min. 35 mm. *Nathan Holmes, author of Welcome to Fear City: Crime Film, Crisis and the Urban Imagination, attends the screening. Mon 7/8, 9:15 PM. Music Box*

10 Things I Hate About You

Larisa Oleyunik plays a popular teenage girl forbidden to date until her shrewish older sister (Julia Stiles) finds a boyfriend; so she and her potential beau (Andrew Keegan) set about finding sis a match. Actually, this isn't nearly as bad as it sounds; Karen McCullah Lutz and Kirsten Smith's script has its witty moments, and some of the secondary characters—such as Larry Miller as the father and Daryl “Chill” Mitchell as an irritable teacher—are every bit as quirky as the leads. Gil Junger directed this 1999 Disney comedy derived from *The Taming of the Shrew*; though the connections are fairly loose, this is arguably closer to Shakespeare in its overall sense of character and even in its sprightly use of music than *Shakespeare in Love*. Others in the cast include Heath Ledger, Joseph-Gordon Levitt, and David Krumholtz. **—JONATHAN ROSENBAUM** *PG-13, 97 min. Outdoor screening. Tue 7/9, 6:30 PM. Pritzker Pavilion, Millennium Park* **FREE**

Spider-Man: Far From Home



RR ^N Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am

This *American Masters* documentary about one of our country's greatest novelists is rich with insights about Blackness in general and the experience of working Black women in particular. The film is most compelling when it addresses Morrison's life in the 1970s, when she juggled writing, teaching, an editing career (in which she worked with, among others, Angela Davis and Muhammad Ali), and parenthood. Yet there are numerous lessons to be gained from the sections on Morrison's childhood in working-class Ohio (which inspired much of her fiction) and the popular reception of her books (which speaks to how Black women are regarded in the American public sphere). The interviewees—including Morrison, Davis, Oprah Winfrey, Walter Mosley, and *New Yorker* critic Hilton Als—are consistently thoughtful and eloquent; at times they convey the musicality and intellectual density of Morrison's prose. The tone is generally celebratory and, given Morrison's extraordinary impact on American letters, deservedly so. Timothy Greenfield-Sanders directed. —**BEN SACHS** 120 min. *Fri 7/5-Thu 7/11, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, and 9:40 PM. Music Box*



Ophelia

ALSO PLAYING

Bad Black / Who Killed Captain Alex?

A double feature of two very low-budget Ugandan action films (2016 and 2010) by Nabwana I.G.G., each just over an hour long. The first has a street-smart ghetto kid teaching a doctor how to fight; the second is a mafia story about a man investigating his brother's death. 132 min. Coproducer and actor *Alan Hofmanis attends the screening. Thu 7/11, 7 PM. Music Box*

The Biggest Little Farm

John Chester directed this documentary about his and his wife's attempt to establish a small sustainable farm near Los Angeles. PG, 91 min. *Fri 7/5, 2 and 6 PM; Sat 7/6, 6:30 PM; Sun 7/7, 3:15 PM; Mon 7/8, 6 PM; Tue 7/9, 8 PM; Wed 7/10, 6 PM; and Thu 7/11, 8 PM. Gene Siskel Film Center*

The Cure: Anniversary 1978-2018 Live in Hyde Park

Tim Pope directed this music documentary of a 2018 London concert by the Cure to mark their 40th anniversary. 137 min. *Thu 7/11, 10 PM. Music Box*

Deconstructing the Beatles: Magical Mystery Tour

Beatles expert Scott Freiman explores the music of the band's 1967 film *Magical Mystery Tour* and its accompanying album. Sean Gallagher and Justin Drobinski directed. 98 min. *Sun 7/7, 11:30 AM, and Wed 7/10, 7 PM. Music Box*

NASA Moon Landing 50th Anniversary

A program celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing that includes an episode of the 1980 tele-

vision series *Cosmos* and a selection of NASA-related short films. *Outdoor screening. Wed 7/10, 8:30 PM. Comfort Station FREE*

No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger

A 1968 documentary on racism, activism, and the war in Southeast Asia, filmed at the 1967 Harlem Fall Mobilization March. David Weiss directed. *An abridged 68-minute version is showing. Screening with Kent Garrett's 1971 Black Journal television episode "The Black G.I." (54 min.). Followed by a discussion. Sat 7/6, 4 PM. Stony Island Arts Bank FREE*

Pictures of Susan

A 2012 documentary about New Zealand outsider artist Susan King, who stopped talking at age four and expressed herself through her art. Dan Salmon directed. 86 min. *Thu 7/11, 7 PM. Intuit*

Tour de France

Rachid Djaidani directed this 2016 French drama about a young rapper who has to leave Paris suddenly and ends up accompanying his producer's father, who is touring the ports of France. In French, Russian, and Basque with subtitles. 95 min. *Wed 7/10, 6:30 PM. Chicago Cultural Center FREE*

Short Films by Agnès Varda—Program I

A program of short narrative and documentary films (1958-83) by French director Agnès Varda, including *Du Côté de la Côte*, *L'Opera Mouffe*, *Uncle Yanco*, *Reponse des Femmes*, and *Ulysse*. 96 min. 16 mm and 35 mm. *Thu 7/11, 7 PM. Block FREE*

When Tomorrow Comes

John M. Stahl directed this 1939 romantic melodrama about a married concert pianist (Charles Boyer) and a

waitress (Irene Dunne). 90 min. 35 mm. *Wed 7/10, 7:30 PM. Northeastern Illinois University*

The Widowed Witch

A 2017 Chinese drama about a rural widow who attempts to support herself and her child by pretending to be a shaman. Cai Chengjie directed. In Mandarin with subtitles. 120 min. *Fri 7/5, 7 PM; Sat 7/6, 2, 4, and 7:30 PM; Sun 7/7, 3:30 and 6 PM; Mon 7/8-Thu 7/11, 7 PM. Facets Cinémathèque*

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Omen gets back in the game

After years away, the Chicago rapper and producer returns to Dreamville Records' active list—and to the south-side park where he learned to play.

Written by **ARTHUR E. HAYNES II**

Photography by **THOUGHTPOET**

Shot at **NAT KING COLE PARK, 361 E. 85TH**

the
TRIBE

“**Y**ou a hooper?” asks the boy, cocking his head. He’s one of several kids at Nat King Cole Park in Chatham, and they all seem to have similar questions about what Damon Coleman is doing there. A half-melted popsicle in the boy’s hand drips onto the court and his shoes, but he doesn’t seem to notice.

Coleman is six foot four, so it’s easy to see why he might look like a ballplayer. But in his SB Dunk High Dog Walkers, camo pants, and Dreamville sweatshirt, he’s hardly dressed for the court. He’s 37, and though he moved back to Chicago a few years ago, this is the first time he’s been to Cole Park in ages. He looks down at the kid and shakes his head, smiling. “Naw,” he says. “I used to be.”

These days, Coleman explains, he’s a rapper and producer, and he goes by Omen. Since 2015, he’s been signed to Dreamville Records, the label founded by his longtime friend J. Cole.

Except for his production on “BMO,” a single from Ari Lennox’s new *Shea Butter Baby*, fans haven’t heard from Omen for almost four years—not since December 2015, when he contributed fan favorites “48 Laws” and “Caged Bird” to the Dreamville label compilation *Revenge of the Dreamers II*. But last month Dreamville gave fans their first taste of ➔

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continued from 26

the long-awaited follow-up *Revenge of the Dreamers III*: the rapid-fire “Down Bad,” featuring Earthgang, J. Cole, Bas, J.I.D, and Young Nudy, plus the mellow, melodic “Got Me,” with Lennox, Ty Dolla Sign, Dreezy, and Omen. The album’s release date was just announced as Friday, July 5, and this week two more songs dropped: “Lambo Truck” (with Cozz, Reason, and Childish Major) and “Costa Rica” (whose long list of credits includes Guapdad 4000, Reese LaFlare, Smokepurpp, Buddy, and Ski Mask the Slump God).

Omen put the ball down years ago, but in a way he’s still playing the game. When Dreamville put out the first *Revenge of the Dreamers* in 2014, it included two songs he’d written and produced: “Motion Picture” and “Henny Flow” testify to his artistry as an introspective lyricist and versatile producer. And even then, Omen was no rookie: he already had the mixtapes *Delayed* (2010) and *Afraid of Heights* (2011) and the EP *A Glorious Cool* (2012) under his belt.

The 2015 studio album *Elephant Eyes*, Omen’s official debut with Dreamville, was snatched from streaming services due to sample-clearance issues. “It definitely affected me and changed me, you know, because it was like—my trajectory, I felt, after working so hard and putting so much in, was headed upward,” he explains. “I felt blindsided.”

Since then, Omen has been hard at work on his second album, not yet titled, which he hopes to release later this year. But first comes *ROTD III*. “That will be my reintroduction into the world,” he says.

The music industry, like any game, has rules. And natural talent will only get you so far—greatness demands dedication. In grammar school, at Nat King Cole Park, Omen learned how to play. Cole Park has two courts—one for children and one for serious ballplayers.

“So on the big court, it was a privilege to even get on that court,” he says. “And you had to basically win so you can stay on.” For Omen, who hasn’t yet achieved the star status of labelmate J. Cole, the parallels to the industry couldn’t be more clear.

The sky promises rain on this muggy afternoon, but the rules of Cole Park still reign. The teenagers are playing 21 on the big court, and the younger kids are shooting around on the smaller one.

Since Cole Park opened in 1967, many legends have graced those courts. Derrick Rose played on them in the early 2000s, back when the annual Cole Park Classic tournament and clinic was still happening. Rumor has it even Michael Jordan passed through.

“I heard Quentin Richardson was up here

one time,” Omen says. “But I never witnessed anybody playing—I just would hear stories.”

Omen grew up in Chatham in the 80s with musicians for parents. His father sang for a 70s R&B group called the 21st Century that had formed in Chicago. In 1974, they had a minor hit single, “Remember the Rain?” Omen’s mother was an aspiring singer, and his stepfather not only sang but also played piano, bass, and guitar. “Creativity was big in my family,” Omen remembers. “Just naturally I was surrounded by it.”

Omen started playing piano very young, but music wasn’t a priority for him yet. He had hoop dreams. In grammar school, after class he’d head straight to Cole Park, where he and his friends would get on the court and hoop.

The park taught him important lessons. “A sense of camaraderie—I feel like I got that from being here,” Omen says. As part of the tight-knit Dreamville roster, he knows that the ability to collaborate is essential.

While in high school at Kenwood Academy, Omen started a rap group with friends called Area 51, but he didn’t take it seriously. He still wanted to be like Mike.

“So obviously, Jordan was my favorite, favorite player, but I didn’t feel like I played like him,” he says. “I felt more like a Penny Hardaway or like Allen Iverson.” For an artist in Omen’s position, those are symbolic choices: though he’s not as successful as some of the other Dreamers, he’s had an undeniable impact on the label.

One thing Omen did have in common with Jordan, though, was a fiercely competitive nature. “I was mellow until someone started talking,” he says. He recalls one particular game of five-on-five at Cole Park: “I get on a fast break, and basically I dunked on this guy who was just talking crazy,” he remembers. “He actually went to high school with me. He never forgot that, and the people that was there never forgot that.”

Omen kept playing until his sophomore year at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he majored in creative writing. It was then that he came to terms with a hard truth: he wasn’t going to the NBA.

“I think I had the desire and I had some of the talent, but the other ingredient is basically the work ethic,” Omen says. Back then, he says, his mentality was “childlike.” He failed to understand that chasing a dream isn’t always fun. “All of the things that I’m using now, in this career, is what I had to learn.”

The decision to stop playing basketball would shape the rest of Omen’s life. He immediately dedicated himself to music, a passion he realized had been there from the start, hidden in the background. “So I really



Omen first started going to Cole Park in grammar school, and it’s still a magnet for kids who need a place to play basketball.

THOUGHTPOET

look at basketball as almost like a blessing. It’s like a reminder,” he says. “You gave up once before. Now you’ve got something really tangible, something you’ve been working hard at—something you enjoy. Don’t take it for granted.”

In 2004, as a senior at UIUC, Omen performed as part of the Cotton Club, an annual Black variety show in Champaign. After five years spent juggling the desire to make art and the need to pay bills, he appeared on “The Badness,” a track from J. Cole’s 2009 debut mixtape, *The Warm Up*. He’d moved to New York and was working closely with Cole, and his own career started to warm up too. It was the culmination of a friendship that had begun Omen’s sophomore year at Kenwood: back then Cole was still living in North Carolina, and the two high-schoolers, both fans of Jamaican-born rapper Canibus, met on a fansite.

Omen has been involved with Dreamville Records since its inception in 2007, but it wasn’t until the release of *Elephant Eyes* that he officially became part of its roster. This year, he formally signed with Interscope,

Dreamville’s parent label and distributor. He’s also featured in *Revenge: A Dreamville Film*, a documentary about the January 2019 sessions for *ROTD III* that dropped Tuesday, July 2.

Omen is now a full-time rapper and producer, but he remembers working three jobs at once in 2010, early in his New York years—the Gap, a tennis club, and a telemarketing call center. He also hasn’t forgotten that the road to Dreamville took him through Cole Park. After a hiatus of almost four years, he has the ball back in his court. *ROTD III* and his long-awaited second solo album will give him the chance to cement his position in the game. His previous work with Dreamville has earned him admission to the big court; now he has to show the world that he deserves to stay on.

“The biggest influence Cole Park probably had on me is just giving me a lot of fight, you know? A lot of integrity. I think a lot of the qualities that Chicago is known for in general, I learned them at this park,” Omen says. “I learned how to deal with real life out here.”

@TheTRiIBE

The Block Beat multimedia series is a collaboration with the TRiIBE (thetriibe.com) that roots Chicago musicians in places and neighborhoods that matter to them. Video accompanies this story at chicagoreader.com.



© BENJI MORINO

FEE LION

Part of West Fest (see page 33). Fri 7/5, 5:30 PM (gates at 5 PM), Main Stage, Chicago between Damen and Wood, \$5 suggested donation

FRIDAY5

ENEFERENS *Crimson Moonlight, Vukari, and Tvær* open. 8 PM, Reggie's Music Joint, 2105 S. State, \$10. 21+

In 2018, Jori Apedaile moved his one-man atmospheric metal project, Eneferens, to Minneapolis from Montana, and he'll soon be moving back. But for what he lost in isolation and scenic landscapes during his time in Minnesota, he gained in solidifying his sound. Last fall he released his third album under the Eneferens name, *The Bleakness of Our Constant* (Nordvis), whose nearly nine-minute "Weight of the Mind's Periapt" summons its dreamy clean vocals and ethereal harmonies from within a maelstrom of growls and riffs, leaving the album's title phrase floating in the ether and fading into the oceanic intro of "11:34." It's a gorgeous, meditative record that holds back on raw power to reveal a sweeter albeit no less heavy type of metal. If you do want some raw power, though, make sure to get to Reggie's in time to catch local band Vukari, who've dropped a couple demo tracks from their forthcoming full-length, *Aevum* (Vendetta), that feel like spiraling swirls of howling majesty from the void.

—MONICA KENDRICK

FEE LION See *Pick of the Week* above. Part of West Fest (see page 33). 5:30 PM (gates at 5 PM), Main Stage, Chicago between Damen and Wood, \$5 donation.

JULIAN LEAL BAND *The Mentally Ill and Jollies* open. 9 PM, Reed's Local, 3017 W. Belmont, \$5. 21+

If the 80s had been a perfect decade for music, we wouldn't have the overproduced, radio-friendly power pop of Eddie Money or Bryan Adams still getting pumped over the airwaves—instead, we'd have the fun, catchy anthems of Julian Leal. The Romeoville native, who now lives in Plainfield, never reached the mainstream heights he deserved, probably because he never had management or a regular band and his singles were as DIY as they come. But he did have brushes with fame: his second single, "Get Away," got good ratings from the kids on *American Bandstand*; he appeared as an extra in the 1987 rock film *Light of Day*, starring Michael J. Fox and Joan Jett; and he made a fan out of Bomp! mogul Greg Shaw, who at least considered putting out Leal's music. And he sure had the tunes: Leal's 1986 debut single, "Mad About You," is just as infectious as the Go-Go's song of the same name, and "Get Away" has such a monster hook that it surely could've conquered the charts. Years later, that tune helped revive Leal's career after superfan Frankie Smith helped get it onto the 2012 Numero compilation *Buttons: From Champaign to Chicago* and assembled a new band for Leal. The group includes Smith on guitar, Eric Ottens on keys, Christmas Woods (Smith's wild former bandmate in heavy glamsters Mickey) on drums, and Renaissance man Joe Losurdo (who codirected 2009 Chicago punk doc *You Weren't There*) on bass. With this band, Leal has played with the likes of garage icons the Gories, and he sounds as urgent and blistering as ever, channeling the best of the Raspberries,

Tommy Keene, and 20/20 while retaining his own distinct voice. The best showcase for Leal's sugary, rockin' hooks is his lone LP, first released in 1985 and now being reissued (with bonus tracks) by HoZac, which calls him "the King of Roller Skate Rock." This show is a release party for the reissue, and there's no better time to discover Leal's feel-good tunes than now. Also, as a rare treat, infamous local punk band the Mentally Ill (whose 1979 seven-inch "Gacy's Place" comes up in *You Weren't There*, with Steve Albini calling it "the best record ever") will be rockin' at Reed's alongside the incendiary Julian Leal Band. —STEVE KRAKOW

SATURDAY6

CHOSEN FEW PICNIC & HOUSE MUSIC FESTIVAL Featuring David Morales, Thelma Houston, Lori Branch, Taana Gardner, Lady Alma, the Chosen Few DJs, and more. 8 AM-9 PM, Jackson Park, 63rd at Hayes, \$50, kids 12 and under free.

If you've ever wished that more music festivals were like family picnics, then you need to go to this Jackson Park house-music blowout. In the late 80s, DJs and brothers Tony and Andre Hatchett and their families began hosting an annual Fourth of July reunion barbecue behind the Museum of Science and Industry. For the 1990 gathering, they decided to treat their relatives to a day full of DJ sets with help from the three other members of their crew, the Chosen Few. Founded by Wayne Williams in

1977 and also including Alan King and Williams's stepbrother, Jesse Saunders, the Chosen Few became important players in house music's earliest days and helped establish the culture among young people of color on Chicago's south side. As the Chosen Few returned to the Hatchett family barbecue year after year, they attracted larger and larger audiences; by the mid-2000s, attendance was in the thousands, and the party outgrew its home behind the museum. After a brief stint on the Midway Plaisance, in 2008 the Chosen Few Picnic settled in Jackson Park, which has so far managed to contain the crowds—which have recently ballooned to nearly 50,000. For 2016 and 2017, the Chosen Few expanded to a two-day festival, though it's been one day again since last year. The Chosen Few (whose ranks now include Terry Hunter and Mike Dunn) perform throughout the day, and as usual the crew has recruited some ace guests: they include New York producer and remixer David Morales, disco hit maker Thelma Houston, and Chicago house DJ Lori Branch, who was among the first of the very few women involved in shaping the genre as it was born. As always, attendees are welcome to barbecue, though I wouldn't blame anyone who doesn't want to cut into their dancing time by tending a grill.

—LEOR GALIL

DANIEL KNOX 9 PM, Hungry Brain, 2319 W. Belmont, \$10. 21+

Chicago singer-songwriter Daniel Knox knows how to write a heartbreaker—which in his case could actually mean a protagonist who digs into ➔

MUSIC

continued from 29

a lover's chest cavity to pinch off an artery. The title track from his new album, *Chasescene* (H.P. Johnson Presents), kicks off with an uneasy sentiment: "Darling, I love you by the neck / In this hopeless broken wreck / I love you by the neck." Which is promptly followed by an even darker declaration: "I love you in the ground / You're naked and you can't make a sound / I love you in the ground." The icing on Knox's cake of creepiness is his vocal delivery: he sounds like Tom Waits after adenoid surgery, with bursts of chesty volume and a bit of gravel left over, and his trills and flourishes recall the dramatic phrasing of Judy Garland (if she sang in Johnny Hartman's range). *Chasescene* is the last installment in a trilogy of releases that includes 2007's *Disaster* and 2011's *Evryman for Himself*. Each album explores desperate, sometimes deviant relationships, and the orchestrations on *Chasescene* give the songs an over-the-top cinematic flavor. On two tracks, Knox hands the microphone to equally dramatic guest vocalists: "Capitol" features dark and sometimes whispered lines by British singer Jarvis Cocker, and "The Poisoner" showcases a



Daniel Knox MR. KING

bright-toned yet mournful lead by Nina Nastasia. This winter Knox toured to support *Chasescene* in Europe, where he has a robust following, and tonight's show is his local record release. He'll play an extended set with local collaborators Paul Parts, Joshua Fitzgerald Klocek, and Jim Cooper, and he'll have plenty of vinyl for sale, including *Chasescene* and his latest seven-inch, "Die Hard/Die Harder." —**SALEM COLLO-JULIN**

OUTLIER AT LAKEFRONT GREEN *Bonobo (DJ set) headlines; Derrick Carter, DJ Boring, Quantic (DJ set), Juan MacLean (DJ set), and Machinedrum open. 2 PM, Lakefront Green at Theatre on the Lake, 2401 N. Lake Shore Dr., \$55. 21+*

Since 1999, British producer Bonobo (aka Simon Green) has been perfecting a serene downtempo electronic sound with porous borders. His most recent album, 2017's *Migration* (Ninja Tune), features contributions from precious R&B band Rhye, Nicole Miglis of moody art-rockers Hundred Waters, and New York-based group Innov Gnawa, Moroccan natives whose hypnotic music is rooted in centuries-old Gnawa traditions. *Migration* features a track titled "Outlier," and Bonobo has also adopted that name for his occasional program on Internet radio station NTS, for his Spotify playlist, and for his concert series. In North America, Bonobo has so far hosted Outlier events only in NYC, but this summer he's bringing the series to four other cities, including Chicago—specifically Lincoln Park's Lakefront Green. The only local act on the Chicago date is house legend Derrick Carter, a wise choice that adds extra credibility to an already interesting lineup: it includes Bonobo's headlining DJ set, of course, as well as crucial DFA artist Juan Maclean, lo-fi house darling DJ Boring, globally minded dance producer Quantic, and energetic, genre-splicing beat maker Machinedrum (who's collaborated with Chicago crew Teklife). Outlier should do well here given Chicago's rich dance-music history—though I wish the organizers hadn't booked it for the same day as the Chosen Few's 29th annual picnic in Jackson Park. Festival season includes so few dance-centric events that it's a shame to make fans pick between two superstrong bills. —**LEOR GALIL**



Carly Rae Jepsen COURTESY OF 604 RECORDS

SUNDAY7

BILL CALLAHAN *Bill MacKay opens. 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 1807 S. Allport, \$22. 17+*

Bill Callahan's recent *Shepherd in a Sheepskin Vest* (Drag City) contains the singer-songwriter's first set of new songs in six years. That's a long time for a guy who made 15 LPs in the 23 years between *Sewn to the Sea*, his first full-length as Smog, and *Dream River*, which came out in 2013 (followed by a dub companion, *Have Fun With God*, the next year). But during a series of major life events—marriage, the birth of a son, the loss of a parent—Callahan experienced a long dry stretch. The songs he's written since the drought ended are much more nakedly personal than anything he's recorded before: "What Comes After Certainty" embraces the pursuit of happiness, "747" tries to see the world through a new child's eyes, and "Writing" celebrates the end of his writer's block (while "Son of the Sea" considers the part that new parenthood had in temporarily stopping his creative flow). The new Bill serves up straightforward advice about accepting responsibility and coping with the cycles of life, but he hasn't entirely let go of the absurdity and bone-dry humor that animated old songs such as "I Am Star Wars" and "Ex-Con." For example, "The Ballad of the Hulk" tells a story about relinquishing toxic ways within a tall tale about knowing Bruce Banner's tailor. Never

a slave to a particular style, Callahan changes his sound to suit his material, and here he's replaced the phased guitars, echo-soaked flute, and layered grooves of *Dream River* with predominantly acoustic instrumentation that enhances the songs' intimacy. Accompanying him on this tour are three musicians who played on *Shepherd in a Sheepskin Vest*: guitarist Matt Kinsey, drummer Adam Jones, and bassist-producer Brian Beattie. —**BILL MEYER**

COMBO CHIMBITA *See also Monday. Part of West Fest (see page 33). 5:30 PM (gates at noon), Main Stage, Chicago between Damen and Wood, \$5 donation. 18*

The members of this Colombia-rooted, New York City-based quartet—vocalist and percussionist Carolina Oliveros, drummer Dilemastronauta, guitarist Niño Lento, and bassist-keyboardist Prince of Queens—have been pursuing what they call "tropical futurism" since 2015. Combo Chimbita's magical, trippy rhythms are potent dance-inducing potions that build upon an extensive variety of beats from the global south, including Afro-Colombian cumbia and champeta, Caribbean calypso, and Haitian kompa. The group imbue their experimental jams with Afro-indigenous mysticism and spirituality as well as the fierce energy of punk and metal, and propel them into the 21st century with dub and electro. Their third album, *Ahomale*



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07/31 - **LENNON STELLA**
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SCHUBAS TAVERN

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THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC

PIVOTAL CHICAGO MUSICIANS THAT SOMEHOW HAVE NOT GOTTEN THEIR JUST DUES by PLASTIC CRIMEWAVE



Kahil El'Zabar

DRUMMER KAHIL EL'ZABAR HAS LONG BEEN AN AMBASSADOR AND ADVOCATE FOR CHICAGO'S JAZZ AVANT-GARDE, REACHING ACROSS GENRE LINES IN THE U.S. AND ABROAD. BORN CLIFTON BLACKBURN JR. ON NOVEMBER 11, 1953, HE ATTENDED KENNEDY-KING, MALCOLM X, AND LAKE FOREST COLLEGES BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA TO STUDY AFRICAN MUSIC. BY AGE 18, EL'ZABAR HAD JOINED THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CREATIVE MUSICIANS, AND IN 1975 HE BECAME ITS CHAIRMAN. BEST KNOWN AS A DRUMMER, EL'ZABAR IS ALSO SKILLED ON BALAFON, MARIMBA, KALIMBA, & BERIMBAU, AND IN THE 70s HE STARTED 2 BANDS STILL ACTIVE TODAY: THE ETHNIC HERITAGE ENSEMBLE (WHERE HE'S USUALLY ACCOMPANIED BY 2 HORNS) AND THE RITUAL TRIO (WITH HORN & DOUBLE BASS). OVER THE YEARS THOSE GROUPS HAVE INCLUDED OR COLLABORATED WITH CHICAGO LUMINARIES SUCH AS MALACHI FAYOLES, AZI BROWN, AND COREY WILKES AS WELL AS OUT-OF-TOWN STARS SUCH AS BILLY GANG, PHAROAH SANDERS, AND ARCHIE SHEPP. WITH HIS RESTLESS ENERGY, EL'ZABAR HAS ALSO MINGLED WITH THE MAINSTREAM JAZZ WORLD,

PLAYING ALONGSIDE DIZZY GILLESPIE AND CANNONBALL ADDERLEY. HE'S JOINED THE BAND OF NINA SIMONE (FOR WHOM HE ALSO DESIGNED CLOTHES), CROSSED OVER INTO ROCK WITH SONIA DADA AND POI DOG, PONDERING, AND FUSED JAZZ, HIP-HOP, AND HOUSE MUSIC WITH HIS JUBA COLLECTIVE. EL'ZABAR HAS ALSO SCORED OR APPEARED IN 3 '90s FILMS ("MO' MONEY," "LOVE JONES," AND "HOW U LIKE ME NOW"), TAUGHT AT UIC AND THE UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT LINCOLN, AND WORKED AS A PROMOTER & CURATOR: HE'S HELPED RUN THE JAZZ CLUB RITUALS, BOOKED SEVERAL CONCERT SERIES & SMALL FESTIVALS, AND DIRECTED THE INTERDISCIPLINARY TRAFFIC SERIES AT STEPPENWOLF. AMONG MANY OTHER ENDEAVORS, THE 2014 EL'ZABAR DOCUMENTARY "BE KNOWN" SHOWS HIM WARTS AND ALL: HE'S FATHERED 7 CHILDREN BY DIFFERENT WOMEN, AND HAS BEEN EMBROILED IN MESSY CHILD-SUPPORT DISPUTES. BUT WHATEVER THE STATE OF HIS OFFSTAGE LIFE, THIS RENAISSANCE MAN HAS MADE IMMEASURABLE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE BOUNDARLESS WORLD OF AFROCENTRIC MUSIC.

TUNE INTO THE RADIO VERSION OF "THE SECRET HISTORY OF CHICAGO MUSIC" ON "OUTSIDE THE LOOP" ON WGN RADIO 720AM, SATURDAY AT 6AM WITH HOST MIKE STEPHEN.

ARCHIVED @ OUTSIDE THE LOOP RADIO.COM COMMENTS, IDEAS To plasticcw@hotmail.com

(Anti-), takes its title from a Yoruba word for a being who can commune with the ancestors; it offers a musical homage to the feminine warrior spirit and a vision of communicating ancestral wisdom through music. That energy shines through in Combo Chimbita's performances, where Oliveros drives powerfully cathartic grooves with her transcendent vocals and rapid-fire playing on a percussive scraper called a *guacharaca*. Combo Chimbita's self-made psychedelic videos and futuristic Afro-indigenous apparel promise to make their show a visual feast as well as a sonic one. —CATALINA MARIA JOHNSON

MONDAY8

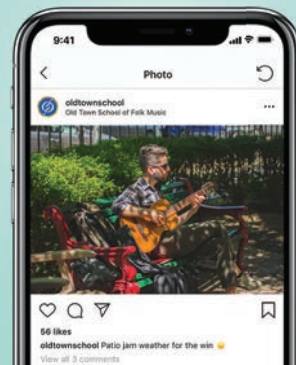
COMBO CHIMBITA See Sunday. 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle, 1035 N. Western, \$12. 21+

TUESDAY9

GLASSING Den headline; Glassing, Dead Sun, DJ B-Trip (Ben Billington), and DJ 420 Web MD open. 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village, 3734 W. Belmont, \$5. 21+

Austin band Glassing have a pretty deep Chicago connection: drummer Jason Camacho spent years here as a major part of our underground harsh-noise and experimental-rock scenes. After arriving from Texas nearly a decade ago, he and a few other Lone Star State transplants opened Logan Square DIY venue the Mopery—a lawless, windowless warehouse whose inhabitants lived in tents and hosted legendary shows by bands as varied as Screaming Females, Bloodminded, and Liturgy. The Mopery also nurtured local music, and ➔

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 **FKJ**
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OFFICIAL LOLLAPALOOZA AFTER SOLD OUT

Aug 02
 **RL Grime**
99 Neighbors

OFFICIAL LOLLAPALOOZA AFTER

Aug 03
 **J.I.D.**

OFFICIAL LOLLAPALOOZA AFTER

Aug 04
 **San Holo (DJ Set)**
Sober Rob

Aug 11
 **IMFACT**

Aug 22
 **Cody Jinks**
Sunny Sweeney

Aug 24
 **JOYRYDE**

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- 7.11** Pouya w/ Ramirez & Boobie Lootaveli
- 7.13** Lyfe Jennings **7.14** Iration w/ Pepper, Fortunate Youth & Katastro
- 7.15** Chase Atlantic w/ Lauren Sanderson **7.23** Cam **7.24** Lights w/ tiLLie
- 7.25** Between Me And My Mind: A Film About Trey Anastasio
- 7.26** Shoeshine Production Presents Obisoulstar w/ JD Revenge & Leonum
- 7.27** Screeching Weasel w/ The Queens and Bigwig
- 8.1** Bring Me To The Horizon **LOW TICKET WARNING**
- 8.2** AJR **LOW TICKET WARNING**
- 8.3** Fuse and Extra Gum Presents Rich The Kid w/ Calboy
- 8.4** Joji **LOW TICKET WARNING**
- 8.8** HELLYEAH w/ Nonpoint
- 8.9** The Faint - Egowerk Tour 2019 w/ Ritual Howls & Closeness
- 8.10** Jonny Lang and JJ Grey & Mofro
- 8.13** Miyavi
- 8.16** SIGMA LXXXV TOUR: The Alarm w/ Modern English & Jay Aston's Gene Loves Jezebel

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THE THREE-BODY PROBLEM BY CIXIN LIU
BENCH
KNEELING IN PISS • THE ARNO

FRI
7/5

THU
7/4
TIM FREE
JOHN MAUS
SPACES OF DISAPPEARANCE
BOY HARSHER (DJ SET)
STEF CHURA
FRENCH VANILLA • SEAN GREEN

7/5-7/7 @ CHICAGO & DAMEN: WEST FEST CHICAGO 2019 (6PM-12PM), 7/6: PHILLY PEROXIDED, 7/6: BOTTLE BRUNCH (11AM-FREE), 7/6: FOXWARREN, 7/7: LOS CAMPESINOS!, 7/8: COMBO CHIMBITA, 7/9: GABBY'S WORLD • BELLOWS, 7/10: ONO, 7/11: GLITTER MONEYYY (RECORD RELEASE), 7/12: IMELDA MARCOS (RECORD RELEASE), 7/13: GOLDEN VESSEL, 7/14: BEACH SLANG, 7/15: JACKIE MENDOZA (FREE), 7/16: IMMORTAL BIRD (RECORD RELEASE), 7/16 @ THE INTL. MUSEUM OF SURGICAL SCIENCE: MICHAEL MORLEY (DEAD C./GATE), THE NEVER QUARTET PROJECT (7PM), 7/17: A NIGHT OF MODULAR SYNTHESIS, 7/18: KYLE CRAFT & SHOWBOAT HONEY
NEW ON SALE: 8/7: SURFBORT, 8/8: THROWAWAY, 8/19: BLACK TAFFY, 8/25: THE FIELD, 9/13: LUKE TEMPLE [OF HERE WE GO MAGIC], 9/20: DREAMGIRL, 9/24-9/25: ALDOUS HARDING, 9/26: BLANCK MASS, 10/2: DRAHLA

MUSIC



Combo Chimbita STEPHANIE ORENTAS

continued from 31

a handful of excellent bands blossomed out of its community, notably free-jazz freaks Tiger Hatchery and noise-rock maniacs Lechuguillas, for whom Camacho played drums. He's since returned to Texas, where he became part of brutal trio Glassing, and their brand-new *Spotted Horse* (Brutal Panda) is a real doozy. The album blends frenetic noise rock, frigid black metal, tortured screamo, and sweeping postrock into something as beautiful and epic as it is punishing and intense. Everyone in Glassing absolutely fucking rips, but a huge tip of the hat goes to Camacho—he's always been a beastly drummer, and his playing has grown even more mammoth, intricate, and dizzingly complex. —**LUCA CIMARUSTI**

CARLY RAE JEPSEN *Mansionair* opens. 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, \$56-279.

At the start of 2018, Tumblr user swordlesbian-opinions posted, "Petition to give Carly Rae Jepsen a sword. I like her and think she should have one." From this, the Canadian pop star's fans launched a social-media campaign that culminated at Lollapalooza 2018, when someone hurled an inflatable sword onstage during Jepsen's performance of "Cut to the Feeling." She brandished the weapon, and Twitter exploded in rapture. Jepsen is no stranger to viral fame; in 2011, she was propelled from relative obscurity to the front pages of international pop culture when Justin Bieber tweeted about the catchiness of her breakout hit (her biggest hit to date), "Call Me Maybe." But no matter how many memes she's inspired—for which her fans have dubbed her "Queen of Everything"—they all come a distant second to her supernatural ability to churn out weapons-grade dance-floor fillers. Though her fourth album, this spring's *Dedicated*, traffics in similar themes of adoration and heartbreak as her previous work, Jepsen is a savvy

romantic who can always find new angles from which to explore love. On the new album she showcases an expanded sonic palette: the slinky disco of "Julien," the euphoric abandon of "Want You in My Room" (reminiscent of Whitney Houston's best dance tunes), and most impressively the one-two punch of "I'll Be Your Girl" (a baroque almost-waltz, anchored by twangy guitar and shimmering harpsichord-esque keyboards) and "Too Much" (which features Jepsen's most vulnerable vocal performance, accompanied only by sparse synths). She's touched on jealousy in the past, most notably on 2012's "This Kiss," but she's never gone as far as the simmering resentment and claws-out viciousness of "I'll Be Your Girl." She finds the flip side of that song's explosive emotion on "Too Much," where she sings about being awash in doubt and uncertainty. *Dedicated* fully realizes the complexity that Jepsen only approached on her previous record, 2015's *Emotion*. With her expanded mastery of pop and her plastic blade, the Queen of Everything seems poised to conquer the world. —**ED BLAIR**

WEDNESDAY10

DIANA ROSS 8 PM, Chicago Theatre, 175 N. State, \$81-\$101.

This year's New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival seemed beset by bad juju: the Rolling Stones begged off due to Mick Jagger's heart surgery, and Bob Seger bowed out, blaming a scheduling conflict. But Diana Ross, fresh off her "Diamond Diana" residency in Vegas, showed up in a big way. In the first Jazz Fest performance of her six-decade career, she absolutely killed it, holding the audience in her thrall as she ran through 90 minutes of her hits. Though some of the Generation Z set might be more familiar with two of Ross's children, *Black-ish* star Tracee Ellis Ross and actor-musician Evan Ross,

Find more music listings at
chicagoreader.com/soundboard.

MUSIC

Diana Ross is inarguably one of the most iconic artists in music history. The velvety-voiced Detroit-born singer-actor famously exemplified the Motown sound in the 60s as a member of the Supremes, and since 1970 she's led a prolific solo career, racking up even more Top 40 hits. With her talent and charisma, Ross has collected awards and accolades like jewels in a crown, including a Tony in 1977 for her Broadway show, an Oscar nomination in 1973 for her portrayal of jazz singer Billie Holiday in *Lady Sings the Blues*, an induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame (as part of the Supremes), a Kennedy Center Honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom, and not one but several lifetime achievement awards for her contributions to culture. Though Ross hasn't released a studio album since 2006's *I Love You* (EMI), she's still out on the road—as she said in a video montage celebrating her Lifetime Achievement Award at the 2017 American Music Awards, “There's nothing more magical [than] the energy onstage.” To see how masterfully she holds sway over an audience, check out her legendary 1983 performance in New York's Central Park, when she sang to nearly 400,000 people during a downpour. When the skies opened up, Ross simply switched to a cordless mike and urged the crowd to stay calm. As her Jazz Fest set proved, more than 35 years since that rainy night, she's still got the power to unite an audience and lead them in blissful sing-along reverie. Her stop at the Chicago Theatre is part of her 75th birthday tour. —**KIRSTEN LAMBERT**



Diana Ross © COURTESY THE ARTIST

FESTIVALS

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AFRICAN/CARIBBEAN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF LIFE

The International Festival of Life is among the city's most diverse, with acts from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America, and the United States. The 27th edition is dubbed “TheReggae50” to celebrate the birth of the genre in 1968, and it's being held in conjunction with the Chicago Music Awards (which take place on Fri 7/5). Live music includes sets from Elephant Man, Nadia Batson, Busy Signal, and Mr. Vegas. *Thu 7/4 through Sun 7/7, noon, Washington Park, E. 58th at Cottage Grove, \$25 per day (seniors \$15, kids 12 and under free), all ages*

CHOSEN FEW PICNIC & HOUSE MUSIC FESTIVAL

See page 29. *Sat 7/6, 8 AM-9 PM, Jackson Park, 63rd at Hayes, \$50 (kids 12 and under free), all ages*

WINDY CITY RIBFEST

You know what goes great with live music? Ribs. This family-friendly north-side street fest offers plenty of both, with five rib vendors from Chicago and beyond and sets from Martha Davis & the Hotels, Linda Clifford, LowDown Brass Band, and others. Napkins welcome but not required. *Thu 7/4, 2:30 PM, Fri 7/5 and Sat 7/6, 3 PM, 4800 N. Broadway, \$5 suggested donation, all ages*

WEST FEST

This staple street fest features a mix of local and touring faves on two stages, one dedicated to electronic music and another where anything goes. This year, practically every artist is a highlight: Combo Chimbita (see page 30), John Maus, Boy Harsher, Oozing Wound, Fee Lion (see Pick of the Week, page 29), Nnamdi Ogbannaya, Ex Hex, Mark Farina, Derrick Carter, and many more. *Fri 7/5, 5 PM, Sat 7/6 and Sun 7/7, noon, Chicago between Damen and Wood, \$5 suggested donation, all ages* 

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THURSDAY, JULY 4

The Cactus Blossoms, Tributosaurus becomes Bruce Springsteen, Nikki Hill, NRBQ, Jon Dee Graham, Blackfoot Gypsies, Katy Guillen, The Heavy Sounds Stax Revue, Kevin Gordon Band, Curtis McMurtry, Mike & The Moonpies, Matt Woods & The Natural Disasters, Hannah Wicklund & the Steppin' Stones, South City Revival, Wild Earp, The Shortcuts, Sunshine Boys, Peter Joly Group, Mike Johnson

FRIDAY, JULY 5

Tab Benoit, CJ Chenier & the Red Hot Louisiana Band, Brave Combo, Zenith Sunn feat. Eric Lindell & Anson Funderburgh, The Suffers, Michael McDermott, Expo '76, Dead Horses, Gerald Dowd Trio, Jenny Bienemann & Friends, Girls Of The Golden West, The Menards, The Dozen Buzzin' Cousins

SATURDAY, JULY 6

Alejandro Escovedo, Marcia Ball, The Iguanas, Cedric Burnside, Terrance Simien & The Zydeco Experience, Charlie Parr, Jimmy Burns, Zimmermen, Walter Trout, Amazing Heebies, Nora Jane Struthers, Edward David Anderson, Kory Quinn, Working Mother, The Belvederes, Pie Eyed Pete & the New Dealers, Christine Melody, Bill Bloomer, Mr. Gac, Ron Lazzaretto Band, Ryan Joseph Anderson, Jarod Bufe Quartet

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NEW

Agnostic Front, Prong, Ugly-bones 9/19, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Laith Al-Saadi 9/12, 8 PM, City Winery

Allday, Mallrat 9/18, 6:30 PM, Subterranean

Amen Dunes, Sasami 7/20, 10 PM, Sleeping Village

Amigo the Devil, King Dude, Twin Temple 11/22, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Aristocrats, Travis Larson Band 7/20, 8 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Jocelyn & Chris Arndt, Phillip Michael Scales 8/29, 9 PM, Schubas, 18+

Bantu Fest 2019 ft. Syleena Johnson, Dee Alexander, and more 7/27-7/28, Midway Plaisance Park

Bitchin Bajas 9/12, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Block Party 2019 ft. Damon Locks & Ben LaMar Gay, Andy Slater & Tommy Carroll, Avery R. Young 7/21, 10:30 AM, Art Institute of Chicago

Jonathan Bree 10/27, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Bring Me the Horizon, Des Rocs 8/1, 11 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Building, Heather Woods Broderick 11/3, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Toranzo Cannon, Rick King's Royal Hustle 7/27, 9:30 PM, Buddy Guy's Legends

Celebrity Hostages, John San Juan 7/18, 8 PM, GMan Tavern

Chnnl, Small Times, To Do List 7/22, 8 PM, Schubas

Claud 11/18, 7:30 PM, Schubas

Paula Cole 10/6, 7 PM, City Winery

Collection 10/9, 8 PM, Schubas

Commonheart, Joel Crouse 11/14, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Consider the Source, Pneumatic Transit 9/27, 8 PM, Reggie's Music Joint

Cybertronic Spree 8/2, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Dababy 8/8, 8:30 PM, Riviera Theatre, 17+

Kyle Dion 8/5, 7:30 PM, Schubas

Nicole Dollanger, Infinity Crush 8/30, 6:30 PM, Beat Kitchen

Dua Saleh, Ché, Mother Nature, DJ Bonita Appleblunt 7/20, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

Faux Furrs, Liam Kazar, Lane Beckstrom 8/14, 9:30 PM, Sleeping Village

Frankie & the Witch Fingers 8/25, 8 PM, Beat Kitchen

Furious Bongos 11/17, 7:30 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Ghostly 20 with Ciel (DJ), Galcher Lustwerk (DJ), JTC, Shigeto & Charles Trees (DJ) 10/19, 10 PM, Smart Bar

Ghostly 20 with Tobacco, Shigeto, Drama, Steve Hauschildt, SV4 10/19, 8 PM, Metro, 18+

Giuda 9/10, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Halima, Myquale, Sarob, Shego Turbo 7/21, 7:30 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Albert Hammond 9/9, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/5

Jason Hawk Harris 9/21, 7 PM, Hideout

Hermitude 9/19, 7 PM, Chop Shop

Hieroglyphics 8/16, 9 PM, Metro, 18+

Illenium 11/8, 8 PM, Credit Union 1 Arena at UIC

Josiah Johnson 9/10, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Kazu 10/12, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Khruangbin (DJ set), Title TK 7/21, 10:30 PM, Sleeping Village

Kikagaku Moyo 11/21, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Kindness 11/8, 10 PM, Sleeping Village

Jake La Botz 7/13, 10 PM, Schubas, 18+

Jonny Lang, JJ Grey, Mofro 8/10, 8 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Man Man, Grlwood 9/20, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Messenger Birds, Honeystone 7/25, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Molly Parden, Carriers, Vender & the Cobras 7/24, 8 PM, Schubas, 18+

Möngöl Hörde, War on Women, Rebuilder 12/8, 7:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Monolord, Blackwater Holy-light 11/20, 7 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Moon Duo 11/20, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Mush, Lili Trifilio, Jupiter Styles 8/23, 7 PM, Beat Kitchen

Ninja Sex Party, Planet Booty, Twerp 10/12, 8 PM, Credit Union 1 Arena at UIC

Onuka 10/18, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall

Orange Goblin, Weedeater, The Skull 8/29, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Pagan Altar, High Spirits, Cauchemar 8/31, 8 PM, Reggie's Music Joint

Polo G, Lul Kel 8/29, 7 PM, the Vic

Daniel Romano 9/17, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

Sam Russo, Damien Christian 8/23, 8 PM, GMan Tavern

San Fermin 10/25, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Screeching Weasel, Queens, Bigwig 7/27, 8 PM, House of Blues

Jake Shimabukuro 7/27, 8 PM; 7/28, 7 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music, 7/27 sold out

Shonen Knife 10/1, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Slowthai 9/13, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Slum Village 8/6, 8 PM, City Winery, on sale Fri 7/5

Static-X, Devildriver, Dope, Wednesday13, Raven Black 12/2, 6:30 PM, House of Blues, 17+

Sunset Rollercoaster, Paul Cherry 10/18, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

Super Doppler, Hustle 9/13, 8:30 PM, Beat Kitchen, 17+

Surabhi Ensemble 8/21, 8 PM, City Winery

Think No Think, Evictions 8/4, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

3Teeth, Author & Punisher, Gost 7/24, 6:30 PM, Reggie's Rock Club, 17+

Tyler the Creator, Jaden Smith, Goldlink 9/4, 7 PM, Credit Union 1 Arena at UIC

Um, Sumthin Sumthin 8/16, 9 PM, Chop Shop, 18+

Valee, Kami, Qari 7/18, 8:30 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Phum Viphurit 9/24, 8 PM, Subterranean, 17+

Mike Watt & the Missingmen 10/2, 8 PM, Schubas

Jamila Woods 7/21, 7 PM, Art Institute of Chicago, Rubloff Auditorium

UPDATED

Marc Rebillet 10/8-10/9, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 10/9 show sold out; 10/8 added, 18+

UPCOMING

Allah-Lahs, Tim Hill 8/16, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Alma Afrobeat Ensemble, Esso, Seres de Luz 7/26, 9 PM, Martyrs'

Black Pumas, Los Coast 7/19, 9 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Boy & Bear 9/23, 8 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Boy Jr., Natalie Grace Alford, Ava Lake 7/19, 7:30 PM, GMan Tavern

Broke Royals, Molehill, King of Mars 8/10, 9 PM, Martyrs'

Ronnie Baker Brooks 9/20, 8 PM, City Winery

Captain Coopersmith, One More Moon, Doomerang 7/12, 8:30 PM, GMan Tavern

Captain UFO, Violet Suns, Lathes 7/11, 8:30 PM, Hideout

Edie Carey, Anna Ash 10/6, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Mary Chapin Carpenter & Shawn Colvin 10/18, 8 PM, Athenaeum Theatre

Chai, Varsity, James Swanberg 7/19, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

Chelou 9/19, 9 PM, Sleeping Village

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Alice Cooper, Halestorm 7/21, 7 PM, Hollywood Casino Amphitheatre, Tinley Park

Shemekia Copeland 10/11, 8 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Matt Corby 10/9, 7:30 PM, Park West, 18+

Crystal Method 8/17, 9 PM, Bottom Lounge, 17+

Mykele Deville, Absolutely Not, Avantist 8/10, 9 PM, Thalia Hall, 18+

Glitter Moneyyy, Showyou-suck, J Bambii 7/11, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

God Is an Astronaut 9/25, 8 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Golden Vessel, Instupendo 7/13, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

John Gorka 8/31, 8 PM, City Winery

Herbie Hancock, Kamasi Washington 8/10, 6:30 PM, Huntington Bank Pavilion

Hepcat, Deals Gone Bad 7/27, 10 PM, Subterranean

Joyryde 8/24, 8 PM, Concord Music Hall, 18+

Judah & the Lion, Band Camino 8/2, 11 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

Avi Kaplan 8/18, 7:30 PM, Thalia Hall

K.Flax 9/19, 7:30 PM, Riviera Theatre

Steve Lehman Trio 9/21, 8:30 PM, Constellation, 18+

Lennon Stella 7/31, 7:30 PM, Lincoln Hall

Luke Temple, Meernaa 9/13, 9 PM, Empty Bottle

Lula Wiles 9/25, 8 PM, Hideout

Mahalia 9/23, 8 PM, Lincoln Hall, 18+

Marina 9/23, 7:30 PM, Aragon Ballroom, 17+

Sick Gazele, Spiral Galaxy, Potions x Flux Bikes, CC 7/22, 8:30 PM, Empty Bottle

Sigrid, Houses 8/1, 11 PM, Thalia Hall, 17+

JD Simo 8/15, 8 PM, FitzGerald's, Berwyn

Summer Salt, Dante Elephant, Motel Radio 7/30, 6:30 PM, Bottom Lounge

Sun Kil Moon 9/14, 8 PM, Maurer Hall, Old Town School of Folk Music

Spencer Sutherland 8/17, 6 PM, Beat Kitchen

Webb Wilder & the Beatnecks 7/27, 7 PM, SPACE, Evanston

Ric Wilson 7/19, 11 PM, Schubas, 18+

Yungblud, Missio 10/4, 7:30 PM, the Vic



GOSSIP WOLF

A furry ear to the ground of the local music scene

IN DECEMBER Gossip Wolf caught up with local guitarist and soul singer **Isaiah Sharkey**, who mentioned he was working on *Love Is the Key (The Cancerian Theme)*, which “reflects funk, jazz, classic R&B, hip-hop, and other genres that’ve influenced me throughout my journey.” The album dropped Friday, June 21, and Sharkey wasn’t exaggerating about its kaleidoscopic sound! This wolf especially digs the string-laden “Love Is the Key,” which recalls early-70s Curtis Mayfield, and the wah-wah pyrotechnics of “Amen.” On Saturday, July 6, Sharkey opens for Michael McDonald & Chaka Khan at **Ravinia**. Hit those lawn seats early!

If you’ve ever watched a Marvel movie and thought, “This would be cooler with a black-metal song on the soundtrack,” then you should listen to **Annihilus** right now! Reader contributor **Luca Cimarusti** recently launched this solo project, taking the name Annihilus from a main antagonist of the Fantastic Four, a flying armored alien from the Negative Zone who’s hell-bent on eradicating humanity—“Pretty freaky dude, I’d say,” Cimarusti told Occult Black Metal Zine in May. Ukrainian label **Depressive Illusions** just dropped the Annihilus cassette *Fire & Life*, which pairs a new EP with the April demo originally released by UK label **Corpse Torture**.

When **Frank Rosaly** packed his drums and moved to Amsterdam in 2016, one of the many fine ensembles he left on hiatus was the **Nick Mazzarella Trio**, which includes two Chicagoans, saxophonist Mazzarella and bassist **Anton Hatwich**. During a Rosaly visit in January 2018, the trio recorded six new Mazzarella compositions live at Co-Prosperity Sphere. Last week, local label **Spacetone** (run by drummer **Quin Kirchner**) and Texas label **Astral Spirits** released them as the LP *Counterbalance*, and on Saturday, July 6, the trio celebrates at the **Hideout**. Kirchner will fill in for Rosaly; Tim Daisy opens with a solo set, and Damon Locks DJs. —**J.R. NELSON AND LEOR GALIL**

Got a tip? Tweet @Gossip_Wolf or e-mail gossipwolf@chicagoreader.com.





The perpetual war machine is a bipartisan creation, fed by Republicans and Democrats alike. MARIA OSWALT/UNSPLASH

FOREIGN POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Deconstructing the perpetual war machine

How Democrats and Republicans keep us constantly engaged in conflict

By **LEONARD C. GOODMAN**

I know it's bad form to say anything positive about President Donald Trump. But his decision to call off a planned air strike against Iran last month should be applauded.

The decision was made, according to the *New York Times*, with planes already in the air and targets picked out. John Bolton, Trump's national security adviser, urged the strike to retaliate against Iran for shooting down an American surveillance drone. The easy thing for Trump to do would have been to let the generals blow things up and kill people.

Trump explained in a tweet thread that he canceled the planned attack after being informed by a general that roughly 150 people would die in the assault. He decided that the possible loss of life was "not . . . proportionate to shooting down an unmanned drone."

In the corporate press, there was some recognition that Trump's calculation might

be correct—the downed drone was not worth 150 lives and a potential new war in the Mideast. Yet the *New York Times* editorial board expressed concern with Trump's "chaotic decision-making process," finding it "strange and disturbing" that Trump would have considered the "possible death toll only at the last minute."

While I don't endorse chaotic thinking about foreign policy, it is worth recalling what normal-thinking foreign policy looks like. Past wars in the Mideast were professionally sold to the American people with massive propaganda campaigns run through the press. Normal presidents first dehumanize the enemy, then ignore civilian casualties.

In 1990, when Iraqi troops led by Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, a PR campaign was launched to convince Americans to send our troops halfway around the world to defend the oil-rich fiefdom. We were told again and again about babies torn from incubators

by Iraqi soldiers. Years later, it was quietly reported that the incubator story was a lie told by a member of the Kuwaiti royal family who'd been coached by the PR firm Hill & Knowlton. Corporate media sanitized its coverage of the war, known as Desert Storm, almost entirely ignoring the human cost.

The campaign of lies and propaganda that got us into the second war against Iraq in 2003 is well known. Besides false reporting about mobile chemical weapons labs and shipments of uranium from Africa, we were fed more reports of brutality, rape, and torture by Saddam's sons Uday and Qusay.

The two Iraq wars combined were responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi troops and civilians, and thousands of American soldiers.

The same pattern was repeated in 2011 by the Obama administration to get us geared up for the NATO war in Libya. There, the official lies were that Muammar Gaddafi was supplying his troops with Viagra to encourage mass rape, and that he was planning to massacre civilians in Benghazi. The NATO bombing plunged Libya into a humanitarian disaster, killing thousands of people and displacing hundreds of thousands more, transforming Libya from the African country with the highest standard of living into a war-torn failed state.

Today, Democrats are raising questions about Trump's authority to bomb Iran without getting authorization from Congress. In response, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says that Trump can use the 2001 AUMF—the Authorization for Use of Military Force passed after 9/11—as justification for a new war with Iran.

Democrats dispute Trump's reading of the AUMF, which only authorizes attacks against the terrorists who attacked us on September 11, 2001. But their position is weakened by the fact that President Obama used the AUMF 19 times to justify new bombing campaigns in Pakistan, Yemen, Syria, Libya, and Somalia, all without any action by Congress. Obama even used the AUMF to justify the killing of a U.S. citizen, Anwar al-Awlaki, in Yemen in September 2011. Then ten days later, another drone strike killed al-Awlaki's 16-year-old son, Abdulrahman al-Awlaki, also an American citizen. No justification has ever been given for the attack on the boy.

The perpetual war machine is a bipartisan creation, fed by Republicans and Democrats alike. It is the inevitable result of a capitalist system that lets private companies profit from killing and war coupled with a political system that allows our national leaders to take campaign checks from these same war merchants. The result is a vicious cycle of wars that can never end because they are designed to spread violence and chaos. Then later, more military spending and war are required to deal with the new dangers created by the past wars.

Under this dysfunctional system, the main job of a commander in chief is to maintain enough conflict zones around the globe to keep the war machine funded to the tune of about a trillion dollars annually. On June 19, the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives passed a nearly \$1 trillion appropriations bill, the vast majority of which was for defense funding.

Trump deserves credit for at least acknowledging the influence of the for-profit war industry on his foreign policy. "Don't kid yourself," Trump told Fox News, "you do have a military industrial complex. They do like war."

As an example, why are we helping Saudi Arabia and its murderous Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman fight its cruel and brutal war in Yemen, targeting civilians, bombing hospitals, factories, mosques, schools, using starvation and disease as weapons of war? Trump will tell you why. We do it for the weapons contracts with the Saudis. But Obama, the president who got us into the war in Yemen, while he also negotiated huge weapons contracts with the Saudis, never offered any coherent explanation.

Accepting that you have a problem is the first step to changing course. Remember, Trump won the White House promising a noninterventionist foreign policy. "Look, I said I want to get out of these endless wars, I campaigned on that, I want to get out," he told reporters in the Oval Office on June 20. Normal thinking about foreign policy has produced a cycle of endless wars for corporate profit. Chaotic thinking may be what it takes to break that cycle.

@GoodmanLen

Leonard C. Goodman is a Chicago criminal defense attorney and co-owner of the newly independent Reader.

OPINION

SAVAGE LOVE

Does having ‘a thing for Black guys’ make one prejudiced?

How to check that shit. Plus: A room with a view, outside and in.

BY DAN SAVAGE

Q: I’m a man from a very liberal background. Recently, a girl I started dating—a girl from a similar background—mentioned that she has “a thing for Black guys.” She also met my childhood best friend, a man of Korean descent, and commented to me that she found him handsome despite not typically being attracted to Asian guys. The position that I’ve always held is that we’re attracted to individuals, not types, and it’s wrong to have expectations of people based on race—especially when it comes to sexualizing/fetishizing people. I think we should date and have sex with

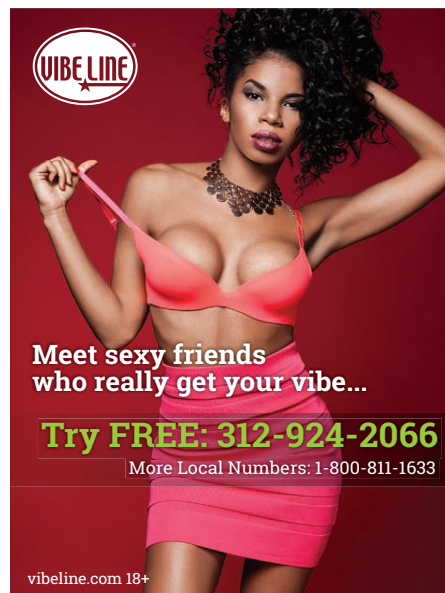
whomever we want and not carry prejudiced expectations into our relationships. I am worried she sees Black men as stereotypes of athleticism, confidence, and the other complicated constructions we’ve made about the Black body, like Black men having bigger dicks. I also worry that she might see me as less masculine and less well-endowed because of my race. I eventually asked her about these issues, and we had a tense conversation. I tried to ask if she had ever checked herself for possible prejudice where her sexual desires are concerned, and she shut

the conversation down by accusing me of trying to control her. I’m trying to balance two components: my own insecurity and the possibility that she’s holding a legitimately prejudiced opinion that makes me uncomfortable. Any advice?
—SEEKING TO INTERROGATE NEWISH GIRLFRIEND’S STATEMENTS

A: It’s a big leap from “I have a thing for Black guys” to “white guys aren’t masculine or well-endowed,” STINGS, and you made that leap on your own. So in addition to confronting your new girlfriend about her attitudes and assumptions . . . you →



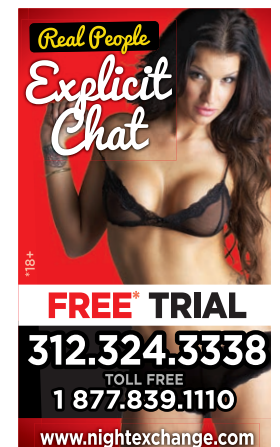
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OPINION

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might want to give some thought to your own?

That said, the things your girlfriend has said about Black and Asian men are legit problematic. When someone describes their attraction to a certain group, racial or otherwise, as “a thing,” that usually means they see members of that group as things—and in a society that dehumanizes Black people, white people can easily come to see Black people as objects.

As for her comment about your Korean friend: Prevailing beauty standards shape our ideas about attractiveness, and those standards are shaped by our rabidly racist culture. A person socialized to only recognize the beauty of men or women of European descent may not even consider the attractiveness of people who aren’t white. And then when someone of a different race does manage to make a blip on their sex radar, it comes as a surprise. But instead of reconsidering their ideas about attractiveness, a dumb fucking white person is likelier to say something stupid like “I don’t usually find Asian guys hot, but your Korean friend is attractive,” rather than rethinking their assumptions about their desires.

It’s a shame your girlfriend reacted defensively when you tried to bring all this up, STINGS, but sometimes people react defensively in the moment and then keep thinking about it. My advice: Keep bringing it up—but it would help if you owned your own shit during these conversations rather than just self-righteously going after your girlfriend for her shit. I have to say, though, I disagree with you on one thing: People do have types, and there’s nothing wrong with having types. It’s a good idea to ask ourselves whether our “types” are actually ours and not just assigned to us by conventional standards of

beauty (white, slim, young) or a thoughtless/fetishizing reaction to those standards (a desire to transgress with nonwhite, larger, or older folks).

Q: I’m a middle-aged African American man. I’m single, I dress well, I’m fit. I live in a basement apartment on a narrow street in a large city. My only window faces the street. After showering, and whenever I’m home, I’m naked. A young white couple moved in across the street, and they have an unobstructed view into my apartment. At first I noticed the woman standing at the window looking my way as I toweled off. Then the male as well. And when I masturbate, which I sometimes do after a shower, I noticed them both making several passes by their windows. Later I noticed the male coming out late in the evening when the view into my apartment is at its optimum to watch me masturbate. The woman will sit on the steps outside in the morning and look directly into my apartment at me while drinking her coffee. More than once she has run her hand up the inside of her thigh as she’s watching. Also I’ve noticed that their shades, which used to be closed most of the time, are always wide open with lights on so I can clearly see them in their apartment. I’m sure the woman knows that I want her—and the male seems to be exhibiting bi tendencies (something I’m not interested in). Are these two a voyeur couple or a submissive cuckold couple? How should I approach to seduce? The other day, I left just as she was going out, and we walked past each other. I thought about saying something, but I don’t want to appear to be chasing her. —DISPLAY ATTRACTS NEIGHBORS’ GLAZED LOOKS EVERYDAY

A: I once dated a guy who was arrested in his own apartment at ten in the morning for masturbating in front of an open window. Granted, he lived across the street from a school (a university, not a middle school), and that may have had something to do with it. But he was a white guy, DANGLE, and considering all the ways African American men are targeted by the police, I feel obligated to warn you about something you already know: cops are always looking for an excuse to arrest or harass a Black man, and your exhibitionism could attract the attention not just of horny neighbors, but also the authorities.

That said, DANGLE, if everything is as you describe it, it sounds like this couple is interested. “Interest” is a spectrum, of course, and they could find it interesting to live across the street from a hot, in-shape exhibitionist, and difficult to look away, without actually wanting to be fucked (her) or be cuckolded (him) by you. But if they’re staring into your apartment while you walk around naked and throwing open the curtains so you can stare into theirs, I’d say the ice has already been broken. So say hello the next time you run into them on the street. Keep that first convo light, neighborly, and nonsexual, and see where it leads. But if during that first convo they invite you over for a beer sometime . . . well, that’s a Yahtzee. But even then, don’t make any assumptions or sudden moves: use your words, draw them out, make sure everyone is on the same page. 

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UCC FINANCING STATEMENT AMENDMENT CERTIFIED MAIL# 70182290000162331274 Filing Number: 1066979000045 Date: 02/05/2019 STATE OF MINNESOTA Shelly- Linette Goss do 9838 South Merrill Avenue Chicago, Illinois (60617) INITIAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT FILE NUMBER 1045091000048 C O N T I N U A T I O N Effectiveness of the Financing Statement identified above with respect to the security interest(s) of Secured Party authorizing this Continuation Statement is continued for the additional period provided by applicable law PARTY INFORMATION CHANGE: Debtor ADD name ORGANIZATION'S NAME IMPERIAL VALLEY PROPERTIES, LLC CHANGED OR ADDED INFORMATION IMPERIAL VALLEY PROPERTIES, LLC 375 E. COMMERCIAL AVENUE, EL CENTRO CA 92243 USA COLLATERAL CHANGE/ ADD COLLATERAL Debtor arises out of want of consideration. In Lieu of consideration Secured Party consents and pledges recoupment of any and all losses incurred by debtor by granting debtor priority lien on account (including, but not limited to any and all off balance sheet ledgering), orders, bonds, insurance, reinsurance, securities, instruments, transfer orders, products, fixtures, chattel paper, debt obligations and any other hypothecated real or personal property emanating from the existing (Non-Fictional) and Tangible real estate property located at the physical address of, 3838 South Merrill Avenue, Chicago Illinois, 60617 and physical land that said property rests upon as described in the Land Spec of Name or SECURED PARTY OF RECORD AUTHORIZING THIS AMENDMENT Goss, Shelly Linette THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE SITUATED IN THE COUNTY OF COOK IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, TO WHIT: LOT 86 IN JEFFERY MANOR, BEING A RESUBDIVISION OF PART OF BLOCK 1. ALL OF BLOCKS 2 TO 10 BOTH INCLUSIVE, AND PART OF BLOCK 11 INCLUDING VACATED ALLEYS AND VACATED PARTS TO SOUTH CLYDE AVENUE, SOUTH PAXTON AVENUE, EAST 96TH STREET, EAST 96TH PLACE. EAST 97TH STREET, EAST 97TH PLACE, EAST 98 STREET, EAST 98TH PLACE, ALL IN HUGH MCGINNIS 95TH STREET SUBDIVISION OF THE EAST 1/2 OF THE WEST 1/2 OF THE NORTH EAST 1/4 SECTION 12, TOWNSHIP 37 NORTH, RANGE 14 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN ACCORDING TO THE PLAT THEREOF RECORDED NOVEMBER 10, 1942 AS DOCUMENT NUMBER 12987496, IN

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COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS. TAX MAP OR PARCEL ID NO.: 25-12-217-097 COMMONLY KNOWN AS 9838 S MERRILL AVE. CHICAGO, IL 60617 THIS FINANCING STATEMENT AMENDMENT COVERS TIMBER TO BE CUT (07/18)

UCC FINANCING STATEMENT AMENDMENT CERTIFIED MAIL # 70180680000133077533
Filing Number: 1042139900032 Date: 10/29/2018 STATE OF MINNESOTA Linell-Elena: Leach c/o 9838 South Merrill Avenue Chicago, Illinois (60617) near (cf. 60617cf.). Non-Domestic Without the U.S. ORGANIZATION NAME: LINELL ELENA LEACH, CESTUI QUE TRUST/TRADENAME/ TRADEMARK-DEBTOR 9838 SOUTH MERRILL AVENUE, CHICAGO, IL 60617 U.S ORGANIZATION NAME: LINELL ELENA LEACH, ORGANIZATION/ TRADENAME/TRADEMARK-DEBTOR 9838 SOUTH MERRILL AVENUE, CHICAGO, IL 60617 U.S SECURED PARTY'S NAME: Leach, Linell Elena 9838 South Merrill Avenue, Chicago, IL 60617 U.S COLLATERAL: This financing statement covers the following collateral The following is herewith registered in the Commercial Registry: The Debtor and Secured Party's property as follows: BIRTH CERTIFICATE as Recorded by the COUNTY OF COOK,

STATE OF ILLINOIS, OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK, DAVID ORR, Date filed: May 18, 1954. CERTIFICATE No. 112-54-635216: SECURITY AGREEMENT No. LL-201804-SA; LL-POWER OF ATTORNEY No. LL-201803 POA: HOLDS HARMLESS INDEMNITY AGREEMENT NO. LL-2018HHIA: COMMON LAW COPYRIGHT No. LL-201802 CLC: DESCRIPTION OF OWNER'S PROPERTY: PARCEL 1: UNIT 105 IN THE RENAISSANCE PLACE AT HYDE PARK CONDOMINIUM AS DECLINED ON A SURVEY OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBED REAL ESTATE: A PORTION OF LOT 29 IN RENAISSANCE PLACE HYDE PARK SUBDIVISION BEING A SUBDIVISION IN EGANDALE. A SUBDIVISION OF THE EAST 118 ACRES OF THE SOUTHWEST 1/4 OF SECTION OF SECTION 11. TOWNSHIP 38 NORTH, RANGE 14 EAST OF THE THIRD PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN, WHICH SURVEY IS ATTACHED "C" TO THE DECLARATION OF CONDOMINIUM RECORDED AS DOCUMENT NUMBER 0009447 AS AMENDED AND SUPPLEMENTED FROM TIME TO TIME. TOGETHER WITH ITS UNDIVIDED PERCENTAGE INTEREST IN THE COMMON ELEMENTS, ALL IN COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS. SOCIAL SECURITY NO. -- C73207908/ Cert.# 5391063; EXEMPTION IDENTIFICATION No. -- and all

Debtor's assets. All property is 'Accepted for Value', and is Exempt From Levy. A Debtor is a Transmitting Utility ALTERNATIVE DESIGNATION (if applicable) Bailee/Bailor ADDITIONAL SPACE FOR (ITEM 4 Collateral): All property, proceeds products, accounts, baggage, effects fixtures, sureties, bonds, orders, titles, and interests therein, is released to the Debtor. Adjustments of this filing id from HJR - 192 of June 5, 1933, and UCC 1-104, 10-104, and 3-419. The orders therefrom are hereby released to the Debtor, to include all signature, endorsements, facsimiles, copyrights, printed, typed, or photocopies of Record Owner's Name and Title. Record Owner is not Grantor to any other accounts by explicit reservation without prejudice, UCC 1-308. Total value of instruments in this filing FIFTY MILLION UNITED STATES DOLLARS (50,000,000.00 USD). All of Debtor's interest in said as sets, land and personal property now owned and hereafter acquired, now existing, and hereafter arising, and wherever located in (5A), Dated the Twenty Fifth day of October, in the year of our Creator, Yahweh, Two Thousand Eighteen (07/18)

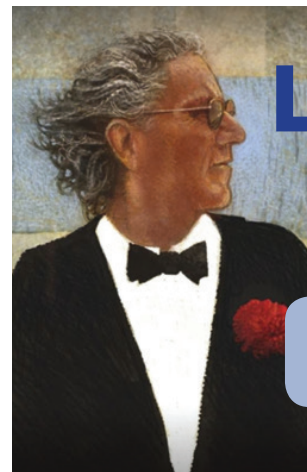
Balancing Point Center for Wellness 4753 N. Broadway St, STE 101 Chicago, IL 60640. As of 8/17/2019, Balancing Point Center for Wellness will close due to

the relocation of Dr. Kristina Chung. After August 31, 2019, medical records can be obtained by contacting our custodian of records, please contact: Clary Document Management, 5600 Pioneer Creek Drive, Minneapolis, MN 55359 phone: 763.548.1320 fax: 763.548.1325 email: chartcontrol@clarydm.com (07/18)

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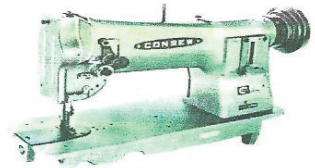
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